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EDITORIAL NOTES

LORD ROSEBERY died on May 21st last at the age of 82. He was the fine flower of the eighteenth-century Whig stock—a Roman patrician, a Plutarchian Liberal, a wit, a connoisseur, a historian, a man of letters, an orator, a statesman, and a sportsman. For some years he had lived in retirement, breaking his public silence very occasionally with a brief and caustic letter to the *Times*. The causes of his early rise to power and fame need no diagnosis. With position, wealth, charm, and talents such as his, nothing could stop him. The causes which ended his public career are more complicated. Partly his supersession is to be traced to his health ; partly, to his temperament (for he was capricious, not prone to compromise, and perhaps inclined, owing to his consciousness of his own great powers and to the easy way in which the early apples had fallen into his lap, to expect that things would come his way without over-much effort on his part) and there was a touch of peevishness in his tone when they did not. Beyond this there was the fact that he clung to the Liberal name when he could no longer cling to the Liberal connection. The Liberal party of his later years was not the Liberal party of his youth : his attitude seemed to be in his later years that his orthodoxy was the only orthodoxy, and that all the other Liberals were heretics. Perhaps he would have better have changed his label and his bench nearly thirty years ago. As it was, he broke with his friends over Home Rule, then spent some solitary but still active years during which he was no man's ally and dramatised himself as one who was "ploughing a lonely furrow" and "a raven croaking from a withered bough." The attack on the House of Lords in 1909-10 drove him into whole-hearted opposition. After that he had very little to say about politics and the most beautiful and eloquent voice of our generation was still.

Lord Rosebery's Art

IT is for others to examine and assess Lord Rosebery's political career. There can be no doubt at all about his position as a master of the art of oratory. He was an orator in a tradition of which Mr. Winston Churchill at his best is now the one conspicuous supporter. The newspapers, when he was in his prime (the phrase was strangely absent from the obituaries) almost invariably used to describe him as "the silver-tongued orator of Empire." His voice was high but full; it carried perfectly and was exquisitely modulated. The speaker used it with deliberate mastery. He was seldom, if ever, "carried away"; he never lapsed into the hot ejaculatory style of the passionate demagogue who receives excitement from an excited audience. All was careful, measured, proportioned: though even the most studied phrase or the most carefully composed paragraph was delivered with such urbanity and such sensitive inflection that the speeches never seemed too artificial when one was listening to them, though they had sometimes a touch of the stilted when one was reading them. His literary and other addresses were marked by the same qualities as his political speeches; the last volume he published (*Miscellanies, Literary and Historical*. 1921) contained some of the best of them. They bore a family resemblance to those of the late Lord Oxford and Asquith, though Lord Rosebery covered a greater range, reflected a greater variety of mood, and had a more unfailing gift of happy amenity than his old colleague.

Lord Rosebery's Books

LORD ROSEBERY'S written works have the same qualities as his speeches: they are clear, elegant, and well proportioned, and in the best of them wide learning is lightly worn and the judgment of events and policies long passed and over is penetrating and serene. His little *Pitt* in the *Great English Statesmen* series was his principal achievement; it remains a model of the short political biography and its perusal should be part of any liberal education. *Napoleon: the Last Phase* and the small monograph on Randolph Churchill are slighter things, but very graceful and illuminated. Lord Rosebery's prose—and this was perhaps increasingly true as time went on—was to a marked extent influenced not merely by his eighteenth-century predilections, but by his practice as a public speaker. His balance and cadence are those of the formal orator; his metaphors are rather those of the master of eloquence than those, more original and more exactly focussed, of the imaginative man of letters. Whenever one encounters a fine passage one hears it ringing through a hall. That is also true of many of the best pages of Burke, who wrote like an orator, even though (according to the best evidence) he was utterly unable to speak like one.

The End of Oratory

WITH the deaths of Lord Rosebery and Lord Curzon the grand manner of speaking has almost disappeared from our midst. Politics are no longer aristocratic, it is unsafe to quote even a hackneyed line of Virgil in the House of Commons, and our current controversies are mostly of such a character that they do not lend themselves either to the sonorous speeches of one school of oratory or to the passionate outbursts of another. Our controversies are not matters which involve profound moral cleavages or are capable of blowing the spirit of man to a fierce flame. They are mostly controversies about pure matters of business; how cheap houses can most efficiently be erected, whether or not certain duties have stimulated certain industries, how best the universal desire for disarmament can be mobilised with practical results, what is the best system of administering coal mines, and whether the railways should be provided with Big or Little trucks. There is little opening here for the mournful or inspiring tones of a Cassandra or a Demosthenes, a Cicero or a Bossuet, a Chatham or a Fox, a Bright or a Gladstone. When Gladstone began a peroration with some such words as "Ireland is on her knees before you to-night," great passions had been aroused and great moral issues were felt to be at stake. But, however important Lord Beaverbrook's Trucks may be we cannot imagine Lord Birkenhead rising in the House of Lords and passionately exclaiming "The Southern Railway is on her knees before you to-night." In the absence of wars and revolutions and threats of revolutions, the proceedings of Parliament in the future will more and more resemble those of a Board meeting or of a Committee, and as far as the public are concerned it may even be that oratory and brickbats go together, and that the same causes lead to the delivery and the cessation of both.

The Book Society

THE new Book Society, which was recently launched with a varied and representative committee of judges, has now made the first two of its monthly awards. The first book chosen for the subscribers was *The Love of the Foolish Angel*, by Miss Helen Beauclerk, and the second a farcical novel about Bolshevik Russia called *The Embezzlers*.

The Book Clubs in America

THE book clubs in America, the most conspicuous of which are the Book of the Month Club and the Literary Guild, have now been in existence for several years, and some of them have many tens of thousands of subscribers apiece. From the beginning they have encountered a certain amount of criticism and opposition. In America, as here, there are people who object on principle to the notion of a large number of people being spoonfed with a standard ration of reading by a commercial organisation, however qualified, in a critical sense, to keep its choice of books up

to a high standard. Some of the publishers feared that the result of the Clubs' activities would be an artificial stimulus to the sales of a few books at the expense of the others. The booksellers were bound to be hostile to Clubs unless it could decisively be proved that one general result of their operations would not be a diminution in the gross overturn of the ordinary bookshops. There was naturally, also, a certain amount of scepticism as to the nature of the choices that would be made.

The Position To-day

AT the moment the position is full of interest. There can be no question at all that there was a considerable demand for some such organisations. The number of subscribers to the Clubs has been steadily increasing and no signs of a slackening are evident. The general level of books chosen has been high. In many instances it can certainly be argued that the books chosen would have been best sellers anyhow. In some, on the other hand, it has to be admitted that good books have been given a success which would not otherwise have come their way. One signal example of this is Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem, *Tristram*. Mr. Robinson, if both quantity and quality be taken into account, is the most considerable poet writing in America to-day and he is sixty. Until *Tristram* his books had small sales and his very name was probably unknown to the bulk of the American reading public. It has to be conceded that *Tristram* is far from being the most important of his works. Nevertheless, owing to the publicity at the command of the Book of the Month Club a very distinguished artist is now in a position which he would not yet have achieved without such assistance. On the other hand some of the selections have been bad and one particularly bad one has just brought matters to a head and produced a volume of criticism such as has not previously been heard. A young woman in California wrote a book narrating her alleged adventures as a girl on a merchant ship. This book has been proved to be, in part at least, a fake, and, having read it, we can say without hesitation, that we should have thought it bad even had we known it to be veracious. The exposure has attracted general attention. Not all the members of the Club's committee are anxious to assume responsibility, and nobody can quite make out who, in the last resort, was responsible. That even has been seized upon by the opponents of the Clubs as an excuse for prolonged discussion of the whole situation. The annual conference of the Booksellers at Boston passed a very vigorous resolution condemning the Clubs; one publisher at least has refused point blank to submit any of his manuscripts or proofs to a Club and another publisher has made a more qualified repudiation. What the upshot will be we cannot yet tell. It doesn't seem likely that the publishers will unanimously boycott the Clubs. Whatever the publisher may feel like, he will be subject to strong temptation if one of his books is selected for coronation with a guaranteed sale of anything from 15,000 to 150,000

copies. As far as we can see the key of the situation rests with the booksellers. If they really and finally make up their mind that the Clubs are not, by virtue of their propaganda for reading in general, bringing the booksellers as many sales as they take away from them, they will kick and bring pressure to bear upon the publishers. Yet, even were that to happen, and even were the publishers unanimously to refuse to have anything more to do with the Clubs, it would not necessarily be an end of the Clubs. The Clubs have only to invite the submission of manuscripts direct to themselves with a view to exclusive publication and a sale purely through the mail, and most authors of any pretensions will be likely to try the Clubs first before attempting to place their manuscripts elsewhere.

Here and There

THE situation here is, however, very different from that in America. When we have talked to English people on the subject we have found them very positive on the subject of differences in national temperament and national culture. It is certainly true that we have not here the enormous lecture-going public that they have in America (people with a smattering of higher education and a desire to know at least the names of the best contemporary books). The suburban woman who in the city of Zenith will spend her winter attending lectures by foreign visitors, actually or ostensibly distinguished, and going to poetry teas, is in England more likely to spend her afternoons shop-gazing in Kensington High Street, and her evenings in darning socks or perusing the works of cheap and ephemeral novelists, leaving highbrow books to the highbrows. It is also possible, though more doubtful, that our population is so sturdily independent that it must refuse, in any circumstances, to take its books from any Committee of Critics. We are doubtful about this as we say: we are not quite so sure what would happen in this regard to the sturdy British population if it were scattered over a continent the size of North America. And here, we think, we come to the radical point. You do not meet the subscribers to the Book of the Month Club in the cultivated circles of New York or Boston or at the leading Universities. They are scattered all over America in provincial cities and villages, and very many of them are probably not in touch with anyone else who even desires to read good books. Here we are all crowded together and the elect rapidly find out by word of mouth what has been published which they would like to read. It must be far otherwise when one lives a hundred miles from the nearest person who wants to read the same books as oneself. English geographical conditions, combined with the fact that we have here a small and generally accepted hierarchy of educated critics—not necessarily all in agreement with each other, but granted positions of authority by persons of one kind or another—may lead to the revelation that there is not as much demand for a Book Club here as there is on the other side of the Atlantic, but we make no predictions. We shall wait and see what happens, and it

will be time enough to examine the merits and demerits of the Society's activities when these have become sufficiently important to need consideration and sufficiently clearly defined to justify the formation of an opinion.

Missing Notes

OUR Bibliographical Correspondent, Mr. I. A. Williams, asks us to apologise for the absence of his usual Notes from this month's issue. He has been contesting a Parliamentary constituency ; and we can only hope that his pamphlets and speeches have been marked by that consistent accuracy which has always been evident in his contributions to our own pages. This may at least, to use a consecrated phrase of the politicians, be " regarded as a legitimate aspiration " on our part.

Binding Covers and Index

THE binding covers and index for volume XIX of THE LONDON MERCURY are now ready. The price of the binding is 3s., and that of the index 1s., 6d. more being charged for postage. Those readers who prefer to send their copies to us to be bound can have the job (index and return postage included) done for seven shillings and sixpence. Some months ago we mentioned the possibility of printing, at the end of our present year, a General Index to our first twenty volumes. If the Index is made at all it will be sold for a few shillings. But we cannot go to the expense of it unless we are guaranteed a certain demand in advance. A few subscribers have already indicated their need of such an Index. Will any others who feel attracted by the idea let us know. It is better to write, if you are moved to write at all, immediately after reading this note. This is the sort of thing which if not done at once is never done at all. We speak from a wide experience of the word unspoken and the impulse unfulfilled.

TWO WOODCUTS



DANSE AU BINION

By HILDA M. QUICK



POTTERS
By HILDA M. QUICK

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

MRS. KATE PERUGINI, one of the most charming women of her time, has died at the age of ninety. She was the second daughter of Charles Dickens, and inherited many of his best qualities, an elvish humour, keen wit, happy disposition and immense vitality—by her immediate family she was nick-named "Lucifer Box." In spite of the infirmities of her great age, she kept her faculties to the end and delighted, as always, in the company of those friends who, in the past, had no greater pleasure than to visit her and her husband in their Kensington house. She was twice married, first to Charles Collins, a brother of Wilkie Collins, and secondly to Carlo Perugini, an artist of more refinement than vigour. She herself exhibited at the Royal Academy, but it is not as a painter that she will be remembered, but as a woman of rare sympathy and understanding, a bridge between our own life and the almost legendary age immortalised by her father.

THE third and fourth parts of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* contain, as the principal contribution, a moving fragment by Mr. Robert Bridges, *Early Folk-Songs*, extracted from an unfinished poem. There is also a portrait of Dr. Sampson by Mr. Augustus John, a verse translation by Professor Oliver Elton from Pushkin, and a quantity of other articles. The paper is not on sale except to members of the Society, whose president is Sir George Grierson. Very little information is given in the paper about the terms on which members are admitted to the Society, or about the obligations involved, but those who are interested should write to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. T. W. Thompson, Repton, Derby.

THE LONDON SURVEY COMMITTEE proposes to issue during this summer a quarto volume about Swakeleys, Ickenham, lately bought by the Foreign Office as a Sports Club. The volume will contain a full historical and architectural description of the house, as well as photographs, sketches, reproductions of old prints and a complete set of measured drawings of the house as it is at this time. Particulars of the price, or any other information, can be had from Mr. Percy Lovell, The London Survey Committee, Lancaster House, St. James's, S.W.1.

A NEW bookshop has just been opened by Mr. F. J. Ward (lately of the Medici Press) at 1, Baker Street, W.1. It is intended to have a very large and varied stock of books on sale, as well as colour prints, wood-cuts, and reproductions of all kinds, particularly foreign prints after the modern masters, which usually are difficult to obtain. The shop will be made as comfortable as possible so that customers may be able to look round at their ease without any obligation to buy. Picture framing is also undertaken.

THE first wide study of "modernistic" house design and decoration as it is known in France, Germany and the United States, has been published by Messrs. Batsford under the title of *The New Interior Decoration*. The authors, Miss Dorothy Todd and Mr. Raymond Mortimer, have divided the book into sections given over to the decoration of various countries, illustrated by some 200 photographs of interiors and a selection of exteriors, taken from the work of Le Corbusier, Oud, Bourgeois, Duncan Grant and others. Mr. McKnight Kauffer has designed a cover and also a frontispiece.

MESSRS. BATSFORD also announce a revised edition of *The History of British Water Colour Painting*, by Mr. H. M. Cundall, I.S.O., F.S.A., late Keeper of Paintings in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The subject is fully treated from the earliest times to our own, and illustrated by many examples. Sir H. Hughes Stanton is contributing a foreword. Mrs. C. M. Villiers-Stuart has written a work on *Spanish Gardens*, shortly to be issued by Batsford. The book deals with Moorish, native and monastery examples, and includes sections on Granada, Andalusia, Majorca and Catalonia.

A RECENT issue of *THE BRITISH MUSEUM QUARTERLY* announces the acquisition, through the generosity of Mrs. Leverton Harris and of the Misses Bloxam, of several most important specimens of Ming porcelain. The extreme difficulty of ascribing, with any degree of certainty, Ming porcelains is well known, and hitherto the museum has possessed no specimens indubitably genuine. Now, however, they may boast of two or three pieces, not only genuine and beautiful, but of immense importance to students of Chinese Ceramics. The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities has possessed itself of several important Greek vases, among which is one black figured amphora of that Loutrophoros type of which the Museum has hitherto lacked any example. The December number is mainly concerned with the fine exhibition of the discoveries at Ur. This magnificent find is quite equal in interest to the Tutankhamen treasures. In the first number for 1929 are most interesting accounts of the three Siamese K'hou masks recently acquired by the Ethnographical Department, of the series of Scythian bronzes, and of two English gold coins of the seventh century. Amongst the autograph manuscripts acquired are Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Mill's *Logic* and Stanford's setting of Tennyson's *Revenge*.

THE BEAUMONT PRESS of 75, Charing Cross Road, W.C.2, announces the publication of *The Wet Flanders Plain*, by Henry Williamson, with cover and title page designed by Randolph Schwabe, in a limited edition of 320 copies on Milbourn hand-made paper at 25s. each. There will also be an edition of 80 copies, on parchment vellum, signed by the author, artist and publisher, at 50s. each. The book is described as "a peace-time diary of an old soldier's impressions on revisiting former scenes of strife in the Great War." It is hand-set in 14-pt. Caslon Old Face, and printed in black, with the title-page in red, grey and black.



HENRY RUSHBURY, A.R.A.

by Powys Evans

POETRY

A Californian Idyll

I

IN the roofed car they drifted round the hill's curved shelf,
 Riding the droning motion as though swept
 Onward and upward by no ordering of his will,
 By no machinery his hands could ever still—
 Floating as on the current of desire itself—
 Needing no power but the flow itself.
 He saw each curving finger and each thumb
 Like carvings on the wheel-rim where they slept.
 He saw her hands like lovers on her knee—
 Embracing, tense, and lying quiet on her knee.
 He saw the upward hillside, and the downward, come
 And part and pass on either side—but did not see
 More than their coming and their passing by.
 His gaze kept roving thus, now forward, and now turned
 Like the warm sun's lowering in the sky
 To slant beneath the torment of her eye
 And rest upon her hands . . . and there it burned.
 He knew, if he should look on more,
 Impending vertigo might loose the wheel
 And hurl them in the canyon by the curved road's side—
 Bed them like stones on the uprushing canyon floor.
 Yet he could almost feel—
 Knowing how close the peak of passion is to death—
 That it were sweeter if they clung and died,
 Sweeter to live in the last mating of their breath
 Than skirt the dizzy edge of death . . . and ride . . . and ride.

How marble-still she sat—as if all nerves were numb.
 Or was she only taut to cover how she, too,
 Reeled on that other height to which they now had come—
 The pinnacle of love, from which they both could view
 The depths of love that they must choose or flee ?
 Or was her quiet due
 To youth's wild awe at what she now could see
 At last between the lofty and the deep ?
 Yet she had only coloured when he said
 " I want you "—as though hearing secrets one must keep
 Without a comment in a shame-averted head.

On right and left the sagebrush and the stone
Came crowding by and pitied him and passed—
Gave misery for misery . . . and passed.
His ache was in the hillside, it was massed
In forms that needed no completing until now—
Needed no kisses but the wind's kiss and the rain's.
His ache was in the red unmated sun that rode alone
Down the steep trail it always rode alone.

His ache was in the dumb car's moan . . .
Yet love must not allow
Passion to touch her!—it must keep in leash, in chains.
With one free hand he groped into the blur,
The wavering blur that held the warmth of her,
And took her hand and felt the fire behind her calm
Quivering its tongue along her finger-veins—
Pressing its heat against the fuel in his palm.
. . . And here the sad sage passed him and the stone
Passed him, and there the sun went riding home alone.

In the warm car they drifted to the high hill's crest.
And a cool salt breeze
Came running up to meet them out of space,
Stopping to pluck a ribbon's end along her breast,
And finger up the skirt about her knees,
And lay a moistened palm against his burning face.

The high hill sank from them, and left them drifting there
Afloat on droning motion . . .
Below, the warm land's curve lay prone and bare,
Lay with her warm dune breasts upturned and bare.
And by her sprawled the gloomed and troubled Ocean
Desiring her like flame.
And buoyed above Pacific's darkened air
A pallid ocean-twin reclined in sleep—.....
Wooring no land but one he touched in sleep,
A shore where neither ships put out nor wreckage came.
Was this the real, the high sea, not the deep?—
The quiet, not the tossed?—
The calm and dreaming ocean, not the passionate flood?

Hearing her deepened breath, his circling thought was lost
Like a limp wing in the quick breakers of his blood.
He stopped the car, and stilled it—turned his head
And saw, as through a vision-filming haze.
Her blowing golden hair

Like strands of sunlight in the tangled and vagrant air—
 Warmer than distant burning rays
 Falling like spray upon the fog-sea's bed.
 Her breathing nearness was a magnet's pull, a spell of space
 That drew his will upon a dizzy brink
 With no more foothold . . . and he ceased to think,
 Feeling her hair flow round his finger-tips, his face.

II

Out of the lowering fog the dark green breakers raced—
 Rolled to frosty water-windrows . . . and tumbled roaring,
 And slid up the beach in a wide foamy pouring—
 Till all but their tang of brine was suddenly effaced.

. . . Silent they walked and walked along the glooming beach—
 One slow warm stride together, then a lone stride each,
 Under the hovering fog, along the bare land edge.
 . . . They seemed the only man and woman in the world—
 A world no wider than a tilting ledge
 Where earth was crumbled rock to which a chill dark swirled,
 And every footprint slid away to thunder.
 Dunes and the sea were walls, the mist above

A ceiling that their warmth was hidden under.
 Could she, too, feel it?—feel their love
 Throbbing within a secret room where wish and will con-
verged?

There was no other living flesh in all the world!—
 Save for a gull that looked along the moistened beach,
 And climbed the dusk beyond the ranting Ocean's reach
 Till thin grey wings and wide grey fog were merged.

The Ocean writhed in torment—putting out his hand
 With lifting lowering knuckles and extending palm—
 Stroking with hungry tenderness a scorning land
 Numb to her ardent lover's touches—numb and calm.
 They walked, and turned and walked—their eyes on sliding
sand,

. . . How trivial were man's words before the rhythmic sound
 Of elemental passion beating tones upon the shore!
 With every step he found
 The cool sea-breath he breathed, and that his heart had warmed,
 Escaping more and more
 The tongue that would have dammed its flow and formed
 Symbols of rounded meaning for her ear.
 Yet why were words required for man's emotion,

When the dark desiring Ocean
Would be as eloquent in silence, were there none to hear ?
The dumb wave still would speak, and deaf land hear.
Let touch alone speak his unrest !
. . . Why did her small mouth tremble under his ?
Eyelids as cool and soft as petals—why were they
Shaking beneath his windy breath, his kiss ?
Her throat-curve, smoother than a birch's, drew away—
All of her body like a blown birch leaned away.
With fevered stealth his palm crept toward her breast—
Curved round and cupped with pressure on her breast.
He felt her small heart hammering to his hand
Like the small heart of a wildling tensed to run ;
Felt her release his throbbing fingers one by one,
Until she broke from him and down along the strand
Fled like the shadow of a flying cloud—
Like the lost figure of a woman in a dream.
He heard his caught breath calling—calling her aloud
As if the sea's thick breath were calling her aloud.
No answer . . . but a thunder and a splash on sand !
No answer but a lone gull scream !
And a lone gull went floating overhead
On the wide wings of drifting mist—
On the fog's own spreading wings above the darkening beach.
Running, he glimpsed her . . . and again she fled.
At last within the very Ocean's reach,
Close to the great dark glistening hand, he caught her
And held her struggling warmth above the surge of water—
Forcing her chin to let her panting lips be kissed.
Then his wild breath was heaving speech :
“ Oh little frightened gull, why shun me so ?
The dark sea calls you, and you wing
Quicker to meet the wave than me . . . Why fear me so ? ”
He felt her arms fight his no more—
Felt them remember him and leap around his neck and cling.
And she was crying in his ear above the salt waves' roar—
“ Oh lover—lover ! . . . oh forgive ! . . . I do not know.”

With dripping strides he bore her limp weight back.
The low wet curtains of the fog brushed round his face,
And fell in dank folds on his track.
Up by the dune's edge in a darkly sheltered place
He laid her down with brutal tenderness,
Falling on drunken knees beside her on the sand.
He felt her cool form yield to his exploring mad caress,

Then sagging low, he put one hand
 Down on this strange rough bed . . .
 And pressed on slimy seaweed, and a cold gull—lying dead.

. . . As from a sudden icy flood
 Desire was chilled and spent and shrunk,
 And the wild flow sheathed over in his blood.
 Weaker than from debauch, he rose and stood,
 Sick with an old disgust that stunk
 Within the very nostrils of his soul, remembering—
 And crawled on memory's flesh, remembering.
 . . . Was this the end of love?—
 A burial where sweet desire was sunk
 In the foul deeps of life beyond recovering?—
 Even beyond the wish for its recovering?
 Fog-walled and ceilinged by the weighted fog above
 The darkness was a tomb
 Choking with his own stench in its low room!
 Groping to the resounding surf, he stood alone
 Facing his life, and seeing wide before
 Only a chill dark over sliding sand along the shore.

He heard her running steps come up behind.
 He heard her voice, like some far echo in his mind,
 Speaking an alien name, and yet his own.
 Shivering, he turned . . . and there a shadow swayed,
 As though a shadow of the dark itself were swayed.
 Was this embodied night she whom his love had won?—
 Or the dim shade of one a wage had paid
 To be a wretched bier where longing might be laid?
 He heard her voice again—a low repeated tone
 That in his muffled ears became an anxious plea
 Against the contradiction that his eyes must see:
 Hair that was no more coloured by the sun—
 Hair that was black—black—black!

What was it she kept saying through the dark waves' roar?
 "We must go back!"
 As if they could go back! . . .
 Could love now lift the fog along the shore?
 No, it was weighted, and their day lay graved.
 Could love reclimb the height it once had braved?
 Or if it could, would it remember where it rode before?
 Did the moon's tide remember where it reached before?
 . . . A distant foghorn bawled its long prolonging moan—
 Anguish gone lost in the wide dark Unknown.

A near horn answered with a bawl abrupt as fear . . .
 And in his heart was both the anguish and the fear.
 Skirting the writhing Ocean's loud imploring reach,
 He groped with her along the sloping beach ;
 And in his nostrils clung the smell of Ocean's sweat,
 And on his face his own lay clammy cold and wet.

III

After a sleepless age could not atone
 For what he was, he fled—as if he might seclude
 Self even from himself in some dark solitude.
 Deep in a cool wood's dusk he walked alone—
 Crunching a thousand years of shade, whose lofty sigh
 Was now the Quiet's undertone.
 Pillared Sequoias, topped with quivering green,
 Propped up the far dim blue of noon beyond his eye ;
 And jays, like little shreds of midnight sky,
 Like the dark thoughts that he had lately known,
 Flew in between
 The high and low—and perched and mocked as he went by.

The faint words in the boughs, the small wind's moan,
 Were like the echoes of his thought in monotone.
 And tart and heavy odours that were also taste
 Were flavoured with his bitterness of heart.

. . . By the clear stream where trees were wide apart
 And the high boughs more loosely interlaced,
 Warm sunlight fell around in strand on yellow strand.
 His eyes upon the brown and shady ground
 Encountered them—and with a soaring bound
 His thought was on the curving hill again, his hand,
 His cheek, against the brightness of her head.
 There was a curling beam along his sleeve
 His fingers would have taken while his stride
 Grew slow to feel her breathing at his side . . .
 His fingers folded on their empty shade instead—
 Folded into a fist of anguish at his side.
 Only the sun could ever grasp the beam !
 Only the great sun could retrieve
 Beauty so bright and lost, or drive the shadows back !
 Over his life was but a moon of dream ;
 His day's high orb hung in eclipse of warmth, of gleam ;
 And the black panther, night, came crouching on his track.

Edging the murmuring water, ferns were bending low
 Grooming their sunlit hair above the pane below
 With gentle brushings as the soft wind blew.
 Why must he think of hair?—Why see a head of gold?
 . . . And here a wild azalea stood
 Offering a starry flake of summer snow,
 Her last pale bloom, for him to take and hold.
 His fingers touched, and felt, and then withdrew,
 Remembering a bosom softness, kin to snow.
 How could he mar an emblem of the clean, the good!
 Better to die of lust than be so wantonly untrue!
 Let Time defile it if he would!
 That was the pity—Time soon would.

The interlocking shadows of the trees
 Drew in behind and breathed upon his nape
 As though his shadow, multiplied by these,
 Had grown as wide as night and breathed upon his nape.
 With bitter will he forced his feet to turn and go
 Up a steep trail that climbed a listening hill.
 Could lost heights be regained for thought's escape?
 The brown dead foliage lay for ever still
 Under the moment's quietude.
 Was this his answer—death and quietude?
 There in the ancient dust an ant was toiling slow
 Up the same path beneath his downcast eye.
 Better to be an ant—unpassioned, soon to die—
 Than man who lived on love, part beautiful, part lewd!
 He saw a slim madrone, blushed and nude,
 Lifting her bare round arms to taunt the sky,
 And yonder stooped a manzanita, naked, red,
 Claspng a shadow lying spent upon her bed.
 Why must he thus be seeing passion in a bush, a tree?—
 In a tense bush and in a wanton tree?

. . . He knelt upon a mossy rock to ease a sudden thirst
 In a dark pool a dripping water made—
 In a deep pool of night on which was laid
 The charred reflection of his face, his mouth . . .
 God, must he kiss the very image of his thirst?
 Better be lost in drouth!—
 Better the tongue should blacken and the lips around it burst!

. . . In panting pause he stood at last
 High on the yellow hill where not a shade was cast—
 Save under withered grass where insects crawled;
 Save under him upon his lonely track.

Sweat was an acrid poultice laid to scald
 His upright belly, and his throat, his brow—
 Too late to draw the poison that was in him now !
 Heat was a nettle shirt that clung upon his back,
 As if he wore the whole hot sky upon his back.
 Was there no tearing off the burning flame ?—
 Wildly he ripped the choking cloth undone . . .
 He yearned to pray—to kneel on his own shadow there
 And from his fever light a blaze of prayer—
 To whom ?—the sun ?
 His tongue refused him . . . no words came.
 Mute as a twisted cedar, and as taut,
 He stood and strained until his reaching thought
 Snapped like a weighted twig—and upward-staring eyes
 Sheathed to a liquid ore from blurred and molten skies.
 Weaving, he groped within a darkened world . . .
 And leaned upon a jagged rock that whirled . . . and whirled.

. . . The madness spent, his eyelids raised upon a shock of
 sight ;

Grey boulder lichens near his leaning head ;
 The yellow hill beneath the yellow light ;
 Far tawny slopes descending left and right—
 A lowering panoramic view that spread and spread
 Down to a tilted plane, half water and half sky.
 He watched the dim grey waves roll up and lie
 With no more sound than pictured waves, or clouds, or stone—
 Stone moving nowhere—stone only feigning motion
 When tides of shadow rub along its crest.
 His ears were deaf with distance, and his eyes half blind.
 Why was it climbing feet had not attained
 As great a height for heart, for mind ?
 In the dark deep where these had fallen they remained.

Out of his bitterness again he scanned the west—
 Where was the loud and writhing Ocean,
 Pungent beneath the fog and dark, that he had known ?
 How sweetly now Pacific breathed upon the land
 Sunning herself in quietude !
 How worshipping his open hand
 Silvered along her brown form lying prone—
 Her warm brown form that he could never own !
 Was it enough for beauty only to be wooed ?
 Was beauty eternal virgin, and should not be wed
 Lest her spent lover lift his weight and find her dead ?

. . . Longing must ache for ever, then, with passion un-
 appeased—
 Ache, roll and toss upon a lonely bed,
 And only love's desire of this be eased.

IV

High on the yellow hill he stood alone,
 Merging his loneliness with that of rock and ground,
 Till reaching disembodied thought was feather-blown
 Back from the wide far quiet of a dim Profound.
 He felt the lowering sun lose heat.
 He saw a fog come out of distance—grow and grow—
 And float on level pinions over sea below,
 Float like a great gull over sea below.
 Turning, he scuffled his feet
 On the descending trail that wound and wound
 Down to a dark green silence that was sound.

Between the ancient pillars of the trees,
 Whose sad religious foliage bowed and hymned
 Dirges of loneliness more old than these ;
 There where the light of day lay dimmed
 Over a spiced and cushioned bed,
 He saw a brown buck with a doe beside . . .
 A tame brown buck that slowly turned its head,
 Pointed its oval ears, and wonder-eyed
 Watched how a grim man came with blundering tread
 And looked on them . . . and sobbing without shame
 Startled the calm dusk with a woman's name.

LEROY McLEOD

THE WATERSPOUT

Taken down (1926) from conversation with

ALFRED ALOYSIUS HORN

by ETHELREDA LEWIS

“**E**XCUSE me mentioning this wineglass, Ma’am. Without wishing to draw attention to its emptiness this stem calls my memory to the shape of a waterspout.

“Talk of visions! There’s ways of forgetting Sunday nights in the Golden City when you’ve seen what I’ve seen. Live by a lake long enough to see the birth of a waterspout and you’ll forget all little Bolsheviks and their mothers. You’ll have seen something the gods could stare at. A gigantic play of the elements.

“Aye . . . All day long you see little African devils* twisting their skirts about. Several of ’em, same as if they were reconnoitring. Spying out the weather, same as we used to tap the barometer. Then along towards sunset comes a bigger one, spreading out a bit of a roaring whisper with the twirling of his skirts. And the roar grows louder. Then if luck has it that he ventures on the water you’ll see the grandest battle between the lake and the clouds.

“The devil moves smooth as a ghost over the lake. He’s exciting and teasing the waters by his circular motion until they seize hold of him. Then he rises to escape. He draws them after him to a common centre, whirling higher and roaring louder when he finds he can’t shake the clinging water from his knees. He’s reaching for the clouds—but they’ll follow! Aye, the so-called laws of gravitation’ll be forgotten for once. When they rise clinging to him, you’d think all the lake’s bound to follow, roaring after the feller they’ve got hold of. The water’s sucked from the banks—all the lake’s one convex curve that reaches up to the column that’s making for the clouds. No thunder and lightning, only the great roar of the wind and the water whirling together in space. . . .

“The natives run about distracted. They don’t know where that great weight of water is likely to fall. So they run in the opposite direction to its passage on the lake.

“The column whirls up—an aspiring cone, a beautiful shape—and joins the clouds in another great curve o’ symmetry that’s held in place and spread abroad by the weight of the clouds. Spreads out like a tree-top. One o’ these flat pines. . . .

“The natives get terribly distracted, poor things—they’re at the whim of Nature at play.

“Aye, the waterspout . . . Rises like a goblet of the gods, full o’ cloudy colours. Not truly transparent—more like a twisted movement of all the primal colours inside that smooth stem of water. Talk of Venetian glass!

* A local name for the “dust-devil,” or moving column of dust.

" 'Twas this empty glass made me think of it. This base being the lake, and the stem rising in a smooth hollow to join this upper mass we'll label the clouds for convenience's sake. Only this cloud was full o' wine instead o' water. . . . And bending here and there . . .

" 'Twould surely be a fine cloudburst ! Red wine in a ponderous mass and balanced on the nose of some old denizen of the lake. Very precarious. . . . An unnatural process that's bound to collapse, being a reversal of the law of gravitation. And down it comes ! The colour fades away into solid ranks of falling water. . . .

" When it's all over the natives push out in their canoes and gather in the great harvest of fish of all sorts that've fallen from the sky. You can hear 'em shouting. . . .

" Ma'am ? Oh, aye, I've got me chapter here. . . .

" Those lakes have sure confounded me somewhat. Nothing but beautiful mementos of that side of Africa. But you've got to keep your eye on your overcoat where I'm living now."

HELLMUT LIES IN THE SUN

By EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST

Enough! or too much.

Blake.

I

HELLMUT lay in the sun, on the sand near the water. Was the latter moving or not? In the Spreewald it is often difficult to tell what is river and what merely standing water—lakes, small pools, runnels—a liquid maze which splits the huge forest of low firs into the appearance of a succession of plantations.

It was at the beginning of August, and the weather was still and very hot. So Hellmut lay in the sun, naked save for a square of white linen. With one hand he shielded his eyes from the sun, with the other he dug about in the hot dry sand, which slipped through his fingers like some sort of tangible air. Occasionally he would come across the coarse threads of the brownish grass which grew sparsely everywhere around; these he pulled up and threw away without looking at them.

His body, long and thin, smooth and pale brown, looked uncomfortably stiff in the joints,—like a doll whose limbs, not adapted to a horizontal position, will not sink flat. A sultry breeze blew from time to time over it—a faint gust, then a stronger one—up from the feet to the body and on under the shading hand. Hellmut breathed in the hot smell of the firs.

“To dive upwards,” he said aloud, and stretched his arm above his head, freeing the whole of his face. His eyes were wide open, which gave to his face an artificial expression of terror; for the eyes were very prominent, with staring bluish-white round the brown iris. It was altogether a thin face, across which the strong-looking pale brown skin was drawn tightly like fine leather. The lips were bloodless, but not thin. In profile, Hellmut was an ageless and contemplative warrior: in full face a terrified, but determined and rather grasping, young man in the twenties.

After staring for a moment into the brilliant sky he half-closed his eyes, and digging his chin into his chest looked past the corner of a collection of firs across the water to where, on the opposite piece of land, stood a high, round tower. Hellmut wondered at it (not for the first time) and decided lazily that it was worth a visit in the near future. “We’ll all three go,” he said to himself. The inside of the tower was lighted by an ascending scale of round-topped glassless windows. The whole was of grey concrete, with a small dome on top, and looked as if it had been cast in a single piece. It was exceedingly simple and quite unornamented; Hellmut found it beautiful and rather strange. As he looked, two heads appeared one after another in neighbouring windows half way up the tower. The highest was that of a girl with dark, bushy, shingled hair;

the lowest that of a young man whose face and hair seemed equally the colour of white bread crust.

Hellmut's mouth smiled and making a trumpet of his hands he shouted :
" Gerda ! Willibald ! "

The heads perked attentively, looked at one another. Then two hands emerged and waved.

An unhasting bird with wide wings slanted down past the tower, like an outspread hand sketching a gesture, and disturbed the meaning of the waving couple, who now disappeared inside the tower.

" These treasures of earth . . ." whispered Hellmut, still looking across the water and making no endeavour, for once, to interrupt the natural rhetoric of his mind.

Suddenly a canoe appeared round the firs and came swiftly across the water towards him. Gerda and her brother Willibald paddled easily, with the effortless rhythm of concerted practice. Both were dressed only in bathing suits, he in dark blue, she in pale green. When they got near to the shore, where the water was very shallow, they sprang out and walked to land, leaving the canoe rocking on the still, sun-locked water. Then, breaking into sudden, causeless laughter, they threw themselves down on the sand, one on each side of Hellmut's legs. Each took hold of one of his ankles and forced the leg up and down, as if for a physical exercise.

Hellmut sat up and yawned. " Energy itself ! " he exclaimed, and laughed. But as he did so his eyes opened wide again and the expression of fear quite spoilt the effect of gaiety.

" I'm hungry," said Willibald.

" Yes, I'm ready to eat too." Gerda began to stroke Willibald's thick hair.

Hellmut put down his head and stared. " *Du Semmel-blonder Mensch,*" he said slowly.

Willibald's face was triumphantly ugly, the features ill-assorted : his under-lip hung repulsively, his pale eyes were small and buried in the flesh, his nose turned up without charm, his forehead bulged unimpressively and seemed to have no connection with the upper part of his head, like the imitation skin which continues a cheap theatrical wig.

" What a happy life ! " he exclaimed, and threw out his hands.

Escaping, for three whole weeks, from Berlin and the indoor life of students, the three young people had flung themselves without hesitation into the Spreewald—into the sun. They had taken with them a canoe, which could be folded up and carried whenever it became pleasanter to proceed by land to some other water. Food they bought in the various villages, which always seemed to occur conveniently without disturbing the wildness and loneliness of the country.

The instituter of the expedition was Gerda, and according to her original plan it was to have consisted solely of herself and her brother. But at the last moment Willibald had insisted on including Hellmut. His insistence had been final and violent, as who should thrust his foot into a closing

door. Gerda had hesitated, saying nothing. She had known Hellmut longer than had Willibald, and was aware of what a black cloud he was capable suddenly of becoming. But in the near end she gave in and Hellmut came. Willibald had explained himself, speaking impatiently fast with lips whose looseness did not look moral. "He wants taking out of himself even more than we do, Gerda. I've seen more of him lately than you have, and I know . . . I feel responsible. Something might happen. After all, neither of us dislikes him?" Gerda had had to admit that they didn't. And yet . . .

She found that her thoughts could never go straight to Hellmut. They swung out first to her brother and then, obliquely, down to Hellmut; he stood below them, as on a lower step of a great shallow staircase—in the shadow, while they were in the light. Conventionally speaking, she knew Hellmut very well; but her knowledge was tempered by the feeling that he and Willibald had shared one experience in which she had had no part—not because it was outside her range, but adventitiously. Their life in Berlin, shared to an extent which all felt to be uncomfortable, morbid and cramping, was almost entirely hateful to Gerda; but she could not avoid it. Her family, comfortably off before the War, had lost everything during the Inflation, and she had to make her own living in secretarial work in order that Willibald might be able to pursue his studies as an architect. She did not resent this arrangement in the least, or even feel that she was unnecessarily sacrificing herself; it was the social adjuncts to her life—the way in which the young men and women of her age chose to treat one another, and the dubious spiritual capital thus amassed—that caused her constant uneasiness and misgiving and a sense of undifferentiated fear. For she had kept her head during the Inflation and the unrest which had attended it, and so had not been left with the inevitable, passionate egotism produced by a sudden sharp struggle for existence, and therefore characteristic of the young people in her position in Berlin. Her brother had not kept his head and Hellmut had definitely lost his: this she knew. But she had not been able to judge of the extent to which either had abandoned himself to spiritual bankruptcy, or yet the exact nature of the despair she divined in both of them.

Despair in itself did not surprise her: she had felt it more than once, while wondering if so many billion marks would be enough to buy her evening meal and had then heard shooting in the street outside, which made it impossible to attempt to go and buy anything. But even then—even at the worst time of all, when she had seen her elder brother killed by a flying bullet during the Kapp *Putsch*—she had called her soul her own, firmly and precisely reckoning up her accounts with existence, to preserve her sense of values for the better times to come. Those around her had not thought that things would ever improve and they had tried obstinately to drag Gerda down into their own slough of despond. But she refused to go with them: she felt that she knew better. She watched her brother Willibald industriously throwing everything to the winds day by

day, strewing his youth broadcast among the ruined stones of post-War Germany ; she watched and said little, knowing that he would not listen if she spoke.

Then things did eventually improve and the stabilisation of the mark made it possible for Gerda and Willibald to live at least without anxiety.

The first sigh of relief caught in her throat when she realised that the spiritual balance of her brother and her friends had been irretrievably lost. Their souls continued to dither hysterically, unanchored and given over to opposing demons, as if their bodies had received a series of terrible blows. They rushed hither and thither in a fever of work, passionate weeping hanging like a cloud behind their eyes and implied in the very forms of their speech. There was a horrible serious intentness in their pleasures, too, which frightened Gerda even more. She could not imagine why it was that she alone seemed to have escaped infection, and, horrified as she was, she almost wished that she were unable to see the life so clearly.

But, above all else, it was the continual sharing and lack of privacy that nearly drove Gerda mad. Those about her seemed never for an instant to be able to bear solitude of any kind ; they shared everything—meals, lovers, emotions of the meanest as well as of the noblest order. Personal contacts were conducted on the model of those gardens in Berlin which have but a single place of ingress and egress, so that no one who does not intend to use the garden as such may simply use it as a short cut to somewhere else. But of course any number of people may enter such a garden at once, and the attempt at privacy results in a mere farce.

Now she knew what Willibald had meant when he suggested that Hellmut “ wanted taking out of himself ” ; it meant simply “ cannot be left alone.” Gerda might have retorted : “ Why should we be responsible ? Why must I have my holiday spoilt by this gloomy, neurotic man ? ” But she did not. She felt—and the hard times had impressed this lesson upon her—that she was perhaps even more responsible for those she did not love than for those she did ; that she had no right to independent peace, but must throw herself continually into the midst of every turmoil, to prevent any further snapping of threads.

During the first few days of the holiday Gerda felt that she would never be able to carry it through to the end. The effort of comprehending Hellmut in her scheme—across to Willibald, then away downwards, always *downwards*, with a sudden heart-leap at the jerk—tried her strength too highly. This wiry dark man with the senselessly terrified eyes made a single, continuous demand upon her help ; the whole of him appealed to her for protection against despair. And here lay one of the chief causes of her vexation : she did not feel the despair to be properly his own. To allow oneself to be possessed by a neurosis which did not really wear the figure of one’s difficulties seemed to Gerda gratuitously weak, and this was what she conceived to be Hellmut’s state. His own private life (as far as it could be called private) was, she knew, averagely free from entanglements of every kind : he had enough money, he had a job and quite

a good one. Why, then, this cold terror, this passion for self-extinction which walked beside him like a faithful animal? There was danger in him—danger for herself, for Willibald, who could scarcely ever be prevailed upon to discuss anything seriously. The danger persisted, irritatingly. It seemed to Gerda always present—even when all three were apparently in the lightest and gayest of moods, swimming or paddling the canoe or lying in the sun. For Hellmut could, and did, seem happy; his talk was more flowing and spontaneous than theirs and full of a fantastic humour. Gerda watched and listened and wondered—and feared. But she also resented this fear; and her resolution to sacrifice herself, if necessary, for Hellmut left room in her soul for a shrinking hatred, which stooped away from the plaintive terror that cried out to her for mercy.

II.

Having put on a few more clothes, Willibald and Hellmut tunnelled slowly into the afternoon, unaccompanied by Gerda, who said she was tired and went to sleep under the shade of some firs.

Hellmut moved forward in rapid jerks, his very square, sharp-pointed shoulders looking as if they were joined on to the rest of his body by wire springs. Willibald, lagging a little behind as they walked, felt the tremendous stores of energy in the man, as it were a stationary engine vibrating at a great speed. And he felt something of Gerda's fear, knowing that such energy must one day burst into violent action; but, unlike his sister, he would not examine his fear or look at it for what it was, but thrust it away behind a curtain of care-free independence.

"Hellmut!" he said; "a bit slower, please."

Hellmut stopped and looked round. Willibald stopped too. They had rounded the belt of firs on the other side of which was their camping ground. Across a maze of sand and water they could see the beginnings of a village, the buildings very low but not huddled, as dark as the firs against the pale sand and the water which made patches of brilliant, cloudless sky on the earth. At the edge of the trees was a high, square stone and on it sat a young woman. She was dressed in the local costume, her chest and waist tightly constricted by a black alpaca bodice, with a row of buttons down the front, and an elaborate headdress with flapping sides, like a sort of sunbonnet; on her knees was a closed wicker basket. She looked like some kind of black bird perched on the stone. But her eyes were quite unbirdlike, colourless and dull, as if insensitive to the outside world. She sat crouched over the basket, brooding upon it, and her eyes looked without fear or curiosity at the two men.

"Good-day," said Hellmut.

"Good-day," answered the woman. Then, without altering her tone of voice, and as if she had been asked a question, she told them the name of the village.

The two men exchanged glances. "We weren't going there," said Willibald gently.

"So?" said the woman. "I thought you might be." She clasped

her fingers over the basket. It seemed as if she were protecting something, sitting agelessly in calm collectedness by the side of the wood. Her eyelids rose and fell almost rhythmically and the stiff linen wings at the sides of her head swung a little in the breeze. Her feet, in square-toed boots, were set closely side by side on the sandy path.

The two men did not wish to go on standing there, talking thus aimlessly, yet they did not move.

"Are you on your way somewhere?" asked Willibald.

The woman raised her head. "I'm going to the railway station. I'm going to Elsterwerda, to be a nurse."

"Are you leaving home for the first time?"

"Yes—oh yes." She spoke as if nothing could disturb her calm. Yet her being was not passive; it lived, evidently and frankly, from the momentary contact she was sustaining with the two men. Willibald, looking at Hellmut, could almost see the engine slowing down under the pressure of the woman's heavy, tranquil presence. Her body swelled out under the tight, metallic alpaca, which glittered in the sun like a kind of armour, with points of light on the buttons.

"We're used to it, in our part of the world," she went on. "Lots of us go out, all over the place, as nurses. We're said to be famous for it." She spoke with naïve garrulity, as if slightly out of breath; and all the time her fingers bent over and stroked the basket on her knees.

Still Willibald and Hellmut did not move. They were bored, but fascinated and soothed at the same time, by this large and sumptuous bird. Hellmut's eyes were hardly open and his thin, dark face was covered with a look of sickly peace; a smile twisted one side of his mouth and his pointed body hung inside his clothes like the stick-bones of a scarecrow.

Willibald rejoiced, with bloodhound eyes and a hanging lower lip. The understanding of his heart was brief and perfunctory, but, in its way, violently sincere. He was capable of devoting himself seriously to an infinitely remote and uninteresting end. And now he observed the tranquillising of Hellmut and, remembering Gerda, rejoiced.

Suddenly the woman moved her feet—shuffled them in the sand.

Hellmut opened his eyes, and the terror—unreal and masklike—returned. "She's moving her feet," he muttered in a staccato whisper.

Then: "*Alles gute in Elsterwerda*," and "*Guten Tag*," they said, and walked on.

"What you really want is a nurse like that," said Willibald, after a moment.

"Even with you and Gerda?"

"Ech!" Willibald jerked his head like a chicken. "What use are we in Berlin? When you get on your own . . ."

"You *have* been of great use."

Their souls swung together, clashed and swung apart again—pendulums suspended from the zenith of a sky.

They returned home talking of practical things—of the length of time

they could still remain in the Spreewald, of the autumn and winter in Berlin, of money, of lodging, of friends. They came upon Gerda awake, boiling water for tea.

She looked up at them, intending to make some vague, joking remark. But as she looked the afternoon turned to evening between their three faces, and her heart went heavy within her.

III

Later on it was discovered that there was no food left for supper. Someone must go to the village for it.

"Who's going to fetch food?" said Gerda. She did not care which of the two men went; she did not wish to have to go herself.

Hellmut and Willibald were doing something to the canoe. The former's shirt flickered with heroic whiteness against the darkening motionless water.

Suddenly Willibald sprang up. "I'll go," he said; then, more firmly, as if he had made a decision about something quite else: "Yes, I'll go." He went.

Hellmut remained by the canoe, tying some strings intricately inside the stern. Gerda came down to the water's edge and stood looking across the landscape, over which evening had settled, as it were the soft white palm of a hand. Though there was no wind to blow them, the long grasses seemed all to be bent away from her; she took from the sight of them her final submission to a difficult sacrifice. With Hellmut there at her feet, it would surely not be hard to discover what it was she must do—or if not do, at least witness and thus complete. It seemed to her as if the three of them were at the very centre of the world, where all was an endless tract of sand and grass and chains of water and fir-trees, stretching round the earth in a belt of monotonously similar links, like a wall-paper in which the same tiny landscape is repeated again and again. And, in the centre of the centre, Hellmut, opening terrified eyes upon a visionless emptiness, outside which she, Gerda, was privileged to keep watch.

"*Please* give me your profile," she cried suddenly; "I can't bear your eyes. I'm sorry, but they frighten me. They make you yourself look afraid—as if you foresaw sudden death for us both."

Hellmut's face went a dark red. Gerda looked at the thin cheek rigidly turned to her, and thought how beautiful he was, and wondered why he had never prompted her to the smallest impulse of physical love. Then she remembered his eyes.

"I know it," he said, virulently. "You have always made me feel it, without actually saying anything. Do you think I don't know that I'm a kind of Gorgon?" He laughed.

"Can you feel unoffended by what I said?"

"Perfectly well. I would accept anything from you."

Yes, thought Gerda, that's just it. Yours is the attitude that I find so difficult to deal with. Nothing but take, take, take. And your gratitude is more intolerable than the rest.

Aloud, she said : " You are prepared to accept too much. Everything you do is a kind of acceptance. You talk about sacrificing yourself—yes, you do ; I've heard you and your friends talk that way—but all you do is to take. Any sacrifice you made would eventually take the form of accepting back with a concealed left hand what you gave with the right. There is no truth to be found in performances of that sort."

Then, in spite of her request, he looked full at her once more ; but his eyes were not wide open. " However all that may be," he said, " the fact remains that you want to give—to help me. You always have wanted to, ever since I have known you. Do you remember that time, three years ago now, when I wanted to marry Else Reuss, and you saw what she was going to become like and prevented me. Why did you take all that trouble—and it *was* trouble and no mistake !—if you did not want to help me—to give me something ? "

" I know," answered Gerda unwillingly. " But my wanting to give doesn't alter your wanting to take and the unpleasantness of it."

" How like a woman to argue like that ! Women always want to eat their cake and have it, however emancipated they may pretend to be."

" Well, and aren't you grateful that I did get you away from the Else ? It wasn't for myself I wanted you. That you know."

She spoke sharply and Hellmut blushed again. He opened his mouth, then shut it without speaking. The light had almost gone and the sky overhead was a very dark blue, without stars or moon, like an uncut jewel, paler at the edges. The water lay before them, a gloved hand on the pale sandy earth. In spite of the sultry air everything had a cold, dead look—the water, the grass, the firs—as if it were a landscape on the moon—on the very centre of a monotonous dead planet.

Suddenly Hellmut started and looked behind him into the firs. " Someone is coming," he said, sharply.

Gerda looked too. " It wouldn't be Willibald yet," she said, almost whispering.

They waited, their heads strained round, a slight tremulousness awake in their bodies. There was no sound. Yet, though Gerda had heard nothing, she felt as if the scene round her had altered—sprung into a consciousness that watched. She looked at the hair above the back of Hellmut's neck and her thoughts changed direction.

" What did you hear ? " she asked.

" I don't know what it was. I thought I heard something among the trees." Hellmut faced round and took his head between his hands. He muttered something.

" What d'you say ? " Gerda bent forward.

Then Hellmut threw up his head and stared rigidly in front of him into the stark centre of the blue jewel, his lips stretched tight over his teeth—to Gerda again a contemplative warrior.

" Oh ! " he cried in agony. " I have stumbled forward into a dark day. I stumbled because I was so tired—so fearfully tired. You know what our

work is like—how it wears one out. One's feet carry one where they like ; one is too tired to care. And now they have landed me in a dark day. I don't care if I take everything you offer me, if I feel it might get me out." He put up one hand, very strongly and beautifully made, some distance from his face and looked at it as if it were some kind of flag. Then he went on speaking, in a quieter tone, but with the same accent of urgent pain.

" I suffer from visions of myself—myself looking on at scenes in which I long to take part and feel to be outside my range. The simple, slow ritual of lovers, in their recognition of each other's hands on the table in their room—coming and going month after month below the lamp which will in time light up their withering. And the silent, casual look, weighted by years of knowledge, but balanced away from solemnity by the wisdom of use. To achieve contacts which should be light without being trivial. . . . Do you see ? "

" Perhaps. And the contacts which you do achieve—what about them ? "

" They are either heavy or trivial. It is the besetting fault of us Germans : we can only manage the serious without losing our dignity. When we attempt the light, we forfeit respect. Else, for instance . . ." He dropped the hand over his bent knee.

" It isn't always in attempting lightness that we forfeit respect. Some of the things we have done in the last few years, in deadly seriousness and pretension to good, have been even worse. I'm only speaking of private relationships—I don't mean politics—they have been beyond criticism of that kind." She laughed. " But when you think of the numbers of people of our age who kill themselves every year in Berlin. . . . *Do you ever think of them ?* "

Hellmut hesitated. Then : " I nearly was one of them , " he said quietly.

Gerda subsided, taken aback by finding to be true what she had always suspected. " When ? "

" Three months ago. "

" Three months . . . ? "

" Yes. And I wasn't alone in my decision. You remember Viebig and Sternberg ? "

Gerda remembered. The case had made a small sensation in the Berlin press. Two students had shot one another by mutual arrangement ; it was a case of a Suicide Pact, by no means an uncommon thing in the world into which she had grown up. She had known both of the young men slightly : she knew that Hellmut and Willibald had known them intimately. The whole thing had been a horrible shock at the time, but she had forgotten it quickly, having had so much of that kind of thing to forget in the years since the War. Now her interest and apprehension were revived, from a different angle. It had never occurred to her that Hellmut could have known any more about the affair than she had herself. Now she saw what a fool she had been not to suspect something of the kind, knowing Hellmut as she did. Then, suddenly, another part of her mind

clicked into position, like a railway signal, and her heart leapt, and she felt sick.

She grasped Hellmut's arm, on the bare flesh, where the unbuttoned sleeve lay open. "Willibald!" she said. "Did Willibald have anything to do with it?"

Hellmut looked down at her hand holding his arm. "You don't know that *I* had anything actually to do with it, so why do you ask about Willibald?"

"Tell me. Tell me." She shook his arm.

He looked up at her under his brows, and she saw the whites of his eyes—as white as the sickly moon that was not in the sky above her, but all round her, forming the dead earth on which she sat. The sense of a watching presence, such as had followed Hellmut's whispered "Someone is coming," had quite left the air. It seemed to Gerda as if an invisible wall, which had closed silently in round them, had as silently retreated, having missed its opportunity. She let go of Hellmut's arm. He seemed to fall into a decision, his thin face less rigid than before.

"Very well, then. I'll tell you. As a matter of fact, we were both in it, Willibald and I. The idea of the Suicide Pact was originally mine—I mean, as between us four. We had been coming to it bit by bit. We were tired of everything, what with the difficulty of living and the horror of life as it seemed to us. We were all of us overworked, as you know. We saw too much of one another, talking and talking for hours on end every evening, instead of sleeping or resting our minds in some way. I think, really, that we *wanted* to make it worse for ourselves, out of hatred for happiness on such an earth as this; we *wanted* to be permanently overtired and hysterical; we *wanted* to bring ourselves to a desperate pass. And we succeeded, we——"

He paused suddenly, listening. "Someone is coming," he said again, in the same voice as before, like the refrain of a song.

Gerda listened too. The walls were back around her, pressing in. Yet she could hear nothing—not the smallest sound.

"Willibald!" she called softly.

No answer.

"Willibald!"

Slowly, in the silence, the walls receded again. There was nothing there—nothing but the whitish moon-sand, and the dull water, and the spiked tops of the firs, black and motionless like an army frozen to death against the starless sky.

Suddenly Hellmut's voice cut down without warning and the silence fell apart before it. "We brought ourselves to the point where we seemed to ourselves important enough to take a violent line and to achieve something by it. 'Let us give ourselves,' we said, 'to fulfil the despair of our generation.' In this way we proposed to exorcise it for others." Pause. "Those were days of great excitement—of intense joy, too, in a way. We concentrated upon each other, shutting out the rest of the world, as if

we were engaged in some kind of mystery—as, of course, we were. Each time we saw one another we seemed to be haloed off from the crowd, whether in the street or in a restaurant or in a room. We had gone too far to question anything that we thought or did. Unreason would have been merely an irrelevant word (like ‘butter’ or ‘toadstool’) in our context; absurdity had long been abolished by the passionate sorrow which filled our hearts—for ourselves, for everyone else. We used to meet together at night, in Sternberg’s rooms, to discuss it all and to arrange how and when it was to happen; even then, I at least knew that when it came to the point I should have difficulty in bringing it off. This was the one piece of realist thought which assailed me. But of course I also felt sure that I should surmount the difficulty in the end.”

Hellmut paused again. He seemed to have been talking to himself, and to have forgotten Gerda altogether. She, feeling this, put in words for her present existence.

“I want you to go on.”

So on he went, but still as if talking to himself.

“I remember well the meeting before what was to have been the final one. I met you in the Budapester Strasse about half-past six—do you remember? You said I looked ill and tried to get me to dine with you. And I refused, and you insisted, and I was rude. I remember that you were unreal to me then—a tiresome ghost. I felt more real than anyone alive . . . Well, we met in my rooms that night, to decide finally how it was to be done. We sat in a row on a sofa and two chairs—so as not to meet each other’s eyes, I think—and we talked straight in front of us, out into the horrid little room, as if each one of us were alone . . .”

He stopped, his voice trailing away, his body rigid. Though his profile was towards her, Gerda could see that he was staring wildly into a darker night than that which surrounded them.

Suddenly he began again, with a convulsion, evidently forcing himself to speak. “Viebig wanted poison. Sternberg agreed. Willibald said nothing. But I wouldn’t agree at any price. Ah! that would be awful, I thought. I saw my contorted body, twisted away out of life, the soul abandoned for ever to that terrible pain. I shouted my refusal. They seemed angry, but at last Viebig gave in and Sternberg suggested revolvers. We only had two between us—mine and Sternberg’s. I had mine locked up in Willibald’s room—I’ve forgotten why. I offered my room for the final meeting. We were to make ourselves drunk and then do the shooting. It was suggested that we should draw lots as to who should shoot another before himself; but Viebig and Sternberg said it wasn’t necessary—they would undertake the job. That gave me a shock. It had never occurred to me that any one of us would be willing to kill the other—even under the Pact. That shows you how far from reality I had come. For the first time I felt a specific fear of the whole thing. I looked at Viebig and Sternberg and saw them as murderers. And then, suddenly, I thought of what it all meant to me and the fear disappeared completely—for the moment. I

thought of what had always been my vision of a self-imposed death : I called it ' diving upwards '. The moment when you dive upwards would be as the moment when two bodies contract together for the first time in common knowledge of physical love. ' I am not sure . . . I am not sure even yet . . . I *am* sure.' The thunder follows the lightning so closely that the two seem almost instantaneous—as when one watches from a distance a man chopping a tree and hears the sound just after one has seen the axe meet the trunk."

Gerda's eyes looked at Hellmut with the intensity of longed-for discovery. "' Common knowledge of love,' " she repeated. " Have you had that ? Have you ? "

He looked at her, his eyes almost closed. " Oh, yes," he said, as if indifferently. The softness of his tone sounded false—a *quasi piano*.

" When ? Where ? "

Hellmut's eyes opened again, giving to him that look of assumed fear. " I shall not tell you."

Gerda hesitated a moment and then said, as if the words were being forced out of her against her will : " You would never have it with me." She had not wanted to say it ; but all that he had told her had thrust weapons into her hands and urged her to use them like this—pointlessly.

Hellmut's body quivered, as under an electric shock, and went awry under the dark night—became a stiff, pale blot on the colourless earth.

" That is unnecessary—terrible," he exclaimed, mispronouncing the words like one who speaks with his mouth full of food.

For a moment they remained flung back, like two arrows stuck into the ground and leaning away from one another ; their taut quivering made concentric rings in the air.

Little by little the arrows quivered to rest ; the air-rings shut into a centre—petals closing upon themselves. The souls of Hellmut and Gerda were at rest ; they were healed, could rise up again and take their several ways. But they had dealt mutual blows and were damaged : what now remained to be said between them must take the form of a commentary long after the event ; as when old people discuss the loves of their youth.

" Finish the rest," said Gerda.

" That night, when the others had gone, I heard the bell ring. It was Willibald. He had pretended to the others that he had gone home and had then come back by another way. The moment I saw his face I knew what he had come for. I've never seen another pair of eyes like his, which can *droop purposefully*. I knew he had come to make me do something. He had. He wanted me to give it all up, together with him. I think the readiness of the other two to do the shooting had given him as much of a shock as it had given me. At first I wouldn't listen ; but he persisted and ended by making me feel a fool. I broke down and cried. The fire in the room had gone out and it had got very cold ; the air was stale with tobacco. I noticed all this and felt very miserable ; but it was like my former misery turned inside out : it did not make me feel like killing myself. Willibald

was quite hard and self-possessed—or appeared to be. He took no notice when I wept—turned his head away from me. But I knew he did not despise me for it.” Pause. “ So I gave in. When the night came, on which it was to happen, Willibald came and took me to your house—you remember?—and we stayed there until the early morning. Then we found that Viebig and Sternberg had done it without us. But they had not given us away first—by a letter or anything. That made us ashamed. I have been able to think of nothing ever since. All my despair came rushing back, directly the danger was over, and has stayed with me.”

“ And with Willibald ? ” Gerda’s voice sounded like a glass cracking.

“ I don’t know.” The words dropped like stones. “ He won’t speak of the affair at all. I think he is afraid. Anyhow he won’t mention it—flies into a temper if I try to bring up the subject which obsesses me. I know that he brought me with him here to prevent me from killing myself ; I suppose he knew that was about all he could prevent—if that.”

He stopped and had evidently reached an end. He looked as if he would never move from where he sat, his dark head springing from the white shirt like a piece of the night.

Gerda watched him and tried to assemble the scattered pieces of her early resolution. To help—to sacrifice herself : this she had sworn to do. But now that the opportunity had become urgent and clearly defined, she felt more futile than ever. What to say, what to do ? “ Morbid feelings are cured by fresh air, exercise and sunlight.” This was the sort of thing brisk persons said, was it not ? But was it true ? Here was a man, living a life *in corpore sano*, bathing and paddling a canoe and lying in the sun and resting from work. He had escaped from the close, shut-up, student life. Had it changed his mind ?

She was about to speak, to take this line with him ; but, before she could do so, her heart told her, in accents that she recognised as authentic, that what she would say was wasteful and irrelevant, that neither physical exercise nor an atmosphere of *No Nonsense* nor anything else whatever could serve to prevent or cure despair in a soul to which it had gone, blindly, like a baby to a woman’s breast.

Leaning forward, she stared into his face. Though it was so very dark, yet she could see the glaring whites of his eyes and the black pupils, the pale mouth drawn tight over the teeth. She could see that the expression was not willingly his own, that it somehow did not belong to him : he was given over to a worship beyond his own control, of a god which he did not rightly know. He had told her the truth, as far as he was able ; but there was something more—something that made her body recoil from his, with the same quality of terror which she could see in his eyes. What she had said to him—that he would never know love with her—was a truth the intensity of which had forced her to proclaim it. It might be totally irrelevant, insulting, lowering to herself ; but she had had to say it, almost as if it had been necessary to protect herself against a bodily assault. And so her desire to help this man was defeated by a repulsion which she despised

and could not wholly explain, but which paralysed the fountain of useful sympathy and influence she might otherwise have made to play.

Suddenly he looked at her in quite an ordinary fashion. "You're an inquisitive woman," he said.

"Yes, but not *merely* inquisitive."

And this was all that her expression of sympathy came to.

There was a sound of footsteps in the grass and Willibald's tall figure appeared quite near them, his grotesque forehead shining bulbously as if by its own light. Under his arm was a packet of food for their supper.

Later, they stretched themselves in a row hard by the fir plantation. Lying side by side they talked desultorily, preparing for sleep.

"Twice we thought we heard you coming back," said Gerda to Willibald; "but it was a false alarm."

"There *was* someone, though, I'm sure," said Hellmut, from beyond Willibald.

Gerda did not reply to this.

After a long pause Willibald said softly: "Gerda, are you awake?"

He was answered by a little breeze, which pierced the firs behind him with a murmur. He slept. The darkness seemed to deepen, now that all the voices were still; it was as though a lamp beneath the horizon had been turned down and now burnt low, like a sullen protection.

The far sound of a cornet floated steadily from the village over the three sleepers, playing a slow tune.

IV

All three awoke very early, looked at their watches, turned over and went to sleep again.

Soon after eight Willibald awoke for the second time. He sat up and looked down on either side of him. On the right Gerda still slept, with her arm thrown across her eyes; on the left was an empty space where Hellmut had been. "He has gone to bathe," thought Willibald and stood up. "Hellmut!" he shouted.

At the sudden sound Gerda sprang up with a muttered cry of words. Then she became fully awake. "What's the matter?" she said, beginning to fiddle with her thick, obstinate hair.

Willibald looked back at her, with the bright yellow sun streaming on to her face from over the tops of the firs. "Hellmut's disappeared," he said. "I thought I heard him answer my shout from far away, but it may only have been you."

"I?"

"Yes—you woke up with a jump and cried out."

"Did I? Well, shout again and see what happens."

"Hellmut! Where have you got to?"

This time there was certainly no answer.

"Here's the canoe, so he can't have gone in it," said Willibald.

It was Gerda who said: "Never mind. He'll come back when he wants to."

By eleven o'clock the air was even hotter than on the preceding day. There was no breeze at all ; the sun glared off the water and the bleached sand : it was stifling. Gerda and Willibald bathed lazily and wondered why Hellmut did not return. Once they shouted again, this time in concert ; but there was no answer. They inquired of a passing peasant, but he shook his head. Gerda averred that he had not understood what they said. Even after her conversation with Hellmut she did not feel apprehensive, simply because Willibald appeared not to be so. But the joy of life had left her ; she felt defeated—an egg-shell, whole to the eyes of others, but empty to herself. She had failed to carry out her principle on the one opportunity which had presented itself. It was in her mind to tell her brother of her knowledge, chiefly from curiosity to see how he would take it, but partly from an obscure sense that if she could make him face the matter she might shelve some of the responsibility which she felt toward Hellmut.

"Willi," she said, "I'm worried about Hellmut. You see . . . I know about it all."

Willibald looked at her, then away again. "Very well. You know. There's nothing to worry about."

Gerda was amazed at his indifference. She did not know what more to say. Then Willibald spoke again.

"We may as well go and look for him. He can't be far off." He spoke as if Hellmut were a thimble that had been dropped among the grass.

Suddenly Gerda's mind snapped into a definite point. She did not see why Willibald should not be forced to discuss the subject that tormented her.

"Wait a minute," she said. "You always have wanted to put aside words in favour of acts. Generally, you may be right : I don't know. But now I want you to talk to me."

Then Willibald flew at her in one of his sudden rages, his small blue eyes puffy and violent, one large vein swelling down the centre of his ridiculous forehead.

"What's the good of talking ? If you're afraid that he's gone to do away with himself, I should have thought you'd have wanted action. And why discuss what's over and done with, anyhow ? I hate that sort of maundering on, turning over rubbish. Just because you and Hellmut spent hours last night doing it, there's no reason why I should give in to your craving."

Gerda was prepared for this : she always knew when one of her brother's sudden bursts of temper was due to occur. She also knew how transitory they always were. Looking calmly at him she recognised the man who might for a moment have agreed to kill himself. She knew him for a fundamentally sane character, with a realist's point of view ; but it was easy to forget the sudden violent emotions, which stood away from the rest of his soul, entering it unexpectedly with a swirl of wind. He was afraid of them himself and would not acknowledge them, even to her. He was indeed one of those in whom a healthy life may completely expunge the thoughts which bring despair. The tragic life had no permanent

meaning for him ; it could only be given a spurious one by artificial stimulation (not necessarily from without). So Gerda looked calmly at him, from underneath her eyelids, and the vein in his forehead subsided.

"What is it you want to know ?" he said.

"I want to know : Have you ever, in your mind, gone back on the decision which kept you and Hellmut out of that house in the Dützow Strasse, the night when Viebig and Sternberg shot themselves ? Have you ?"

It seemed to Gerda that Willibald's face drooped suddenly with relief—a triumphant relief, as though he had just passed through some danger.

"Is that *all* you want to know ?" he asked.

Gerda hesitated, because of the look on his face. Then she nodded.

"No, then, never," he answered her. "And never shall," he added.

Turning simultaneously from one another they looked across the water to the tower ; its glassless windows were black as ink against the glaring concrete walls. It gave Gerda an idea.

"Let's go up the tower and look out for him," she said.

"All right, but we shall have to go in the canoe. It would take ages to get round by land."

They paddled quickly across the still water, which glittered on the paddles. As they came nearer to the opposite bank the tower seemed to rise higher and higher. It was, indeed, quite a high tower. Pulling the canoe on to the sand they ran up on to the fir-covered hillock behind the tower, where the doorway was. As they went in, a sudden wave of heat broke over Gerda's head and with it a strong smell of resin from the firs.

Gerda went first up the stairs. The interior of the tower was very skillfully constructed, two complete spiral staircases running one above the other round the walls ; there was no communication between them except at the bottom and on a gallery which ran round the top of the tower, outside under the jutting edges of the little dome. Gerda and Willibald were on the lower of the two staircases.

Gerda was nearly at the top when she stopped, gave a cry and pointed across the well of the staircase. Willibald ran up close behind her and looked in the direction of her pointing. On the opposite side of the tower, and on the higher staircase, Hellmut was standing motionless, naked save for his white bathing drawers. His face was rigid and staring ; his dusky body speckled with light from the many windows, he looked like an angry faun. In the overpowering, resinous silence a thin cloud came over the sun, darkening the whole of Hellmut's body into a leaden statue against the concrete wall ; then the sun reappeared and blotched the body again in great washes from chin to hip, and lower across the thighs. This motion on the still figure gave it the semblance of death.

"Hellmut !" Willibald spoke low but clearly, as one who should seek to arouse a sleeper.

But Hellmut continued to stare at Gerda without answering, his face full of rage and hatred.

And she, for her part, would have wished to speak some word to him. But none rose to her lips ; her soul had shut up shop. She looked fixedly back into the eyes which she hated, and tried to mitigate their hatred and her own.

Suddenly Hellmut ran up a few steps and stopped again under one of the windows. Then he climbed on to the sill, with a swift, resilient movement, not using his hands to assist him. His tall figure filled the embrasure, blotting out the brilliant sky with a thick, vivid tracery of darkness. He flung his arms up behind him, into the air outside the tower ; then, like a dancer leaping from the wings on to the stage, he dived upwards, out into the sky.

Gerda screamed briefly and covered her mouth with the back of her hand. Her second thought was : " My God ! Willibald will follow him." She turned, but what she saw was her brother running down the steps three at a time and bumping violently against the walls in his haste. The figure was that of one who rushes to a rescue.

Gerda hesitated ; then, instead of following Willibald, she collected herself and mounting the stairs very slowly, peeped out of one of the narrow windows, her bushy hair catching in the rough concrete.

Far below her Hellmut lay in the sun, his head crowned by water. The crown was wide, long and irregular in shape, and the head which had once made rings in the night air now made them in the water—for a crown. The face, which was turned towards Gerda, stared unflinchingly up into the blinding sky, and presented the mask of a determined and rather grasping, but terrified, young man.

Willibald came running down the slope, knelt and bent over the body, hiding it from Gerda's sight.

Then she withdrew her head and slowly, picking her way on each step, as if descending a regal staircase towards an expectant throng, she left the tower.

A LITERARY SLEUTH

By JOHN M. TURNBULL

MR. ERNEST BATTERS was the leading grocer in our town. He was an ideal tradesman—cheerful, attentive, respectful, and, withal, so popular that his proudest customers were not above exchanging pleasantries with him across his counter. To the stranger he appeared solid tradesman right through. Were he skinned, such a one might almost expect to see a fresh exudescence of suavity congeal into a new and homogeneous cuticle, in its turn giving way, under renewed assaults, to an infinite succession of others, like the jackets of an onion. This was, however, far from being the case. Batters had a soul. He cultivated a genuine appreciation for the best in literature ; and, amongst other authors, cherished a love for Charles Lamb.

He was one of the shining lights of our Church Literary Society, and, when he was animatedly championing some dying cause at our debates, by closing the eyes and deafening oneself for the time-being to the slightest echo of Bow Bells which tintured an otherwise not unpleasing voice, one might almost fancy a certain noble and distinguished parliamentary orator was addressing the meeting. He it was who addressed those famous letters to the Editor of the *Daily Gazette*, on the circulation of Addison and Steele's *Spectator* ; on the evolution of the Billycock ; and on Literature and Snuff. Still greater triumphs now loomed dimly on his literary horizon.

Our hero had recently taken the Society by storm with a paper full of the fruits of painstaking research. He was on the track of some hitherto unidentified *Eliana*, and in his paper had indicated to us, with almost conclusive proof, the nature of Lamb's association with a contemporary periodical called *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*. Such value did the judging committee attach to this paper that he was awarded the Society's silver medal for the most scholarly address of the session. On the night of the reading, at the conclusion of his address, he was positively lionised. Even the exalted Mrs. Colonel Hesketh-Apenrodt of "The Towers" shook him cordially by the hand, and gushingly said :

"We must really thank you, Mr. Batters, for a most pleasantly intellectual evening."

The following is a *resumé* of this epoch-making paper, cleverly condensed by its author for insertion in the Parish Magazine :

AN ELIAN ASSOCIATION.

IN the *Athenaeum* for June 30, 1906, Mr. Walter Jerrold presented some verses contributed by Charles Lamb to the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* in 1833, together with a posthumous set which appeared in the same paper in 1836. A quatrain by Lamb which appeared in the same column of the *Mirror* as the 1833 piece was collected by Mr. Lucas, who, by an extraordinary oversight,*

*Mr. Batters was wrong here. Mr. Lucas omitted the verses designedly.

omitted its fellow from his 1903 edition of the Lambs' *Works*. As reasons have been adduced for Lamb's support of most of the periodicals that he favoured with contributions, an attempt to trace the nature of his association with the *Mirror* should be of interest, and, if successful, of value.

Lamb's readiness to lend active support to any venture on the part of his friend Edward Moxon, the publisher, and husband of the Lambs' adopted daughter, Emma Isola, is well known. If it can be shewn, therefore, that Moxon was interested in the *Mirror*, the nature of Lamb's inducement to contribute to its pages will appear.

In the number of this periodical for August 18, 1832, appeared a short article in which the good nature of Sir Philip Curtis, a distinguished London alderman, was commented upon. Appended to the article was a footnote, in editorial form, commencing :

"Probably our correspondent may recollect Sir William and the orange, at one of the contested City elections . . ." and proceeding to relate a further anecdote illustrative of the genial character of the Knight. This note was signed "Ed. M.", signifying, presumably, Edward Moxon. Independently such an interpretation cannot definitely be assumed, although the likelihood is such that but slight additional evidence will be required to corroborate it.

As early as 1828 there appeared in the number of the *Mirror* for December 27, under the title "*Christmas Scraps*," a review of Moxon's poem *Christmas* which had just been published with a dedication to Lamb. Now as Moxon was not considered by any means a poet of note, and as this review received a prominence which could have been accorded by a disinterested journal only to the work of a celebrity, it may be inferred either that Moxon had already acquired an interest in the *Mirror*, or that the cordial relations existing between himself and the proprietors presaged such a contingency. To attribute the "Ed. M." paragraph to Moxon is not therefore necessarily an extravagant contention, and it may accordingly be assumed that to his connexion with it the *Mirror* was indebted for these contributions by Lamb.

On its appearance in the Magazine, a prominent member who had been absent from the reading offered to post a copy to an eminent authority on Lamb with whom he claimed acquaintance, and elicit an authoritative opinion. The Reverend Percival Spring, however, dissuaded Batters from adopting this course, remarking that, without wishing to question the integrity of the aforesaid eminent authority, he considered Batters would, by submitting the article in its original uncondensed form to the *Pantheon*, not only secure an enviable reputation for himself as a litterateur, but would at the same time, in so doing, reflect honour upon the society of which he was so esteemed an ornament. The author's imagination was fired by this suggestion, and he declared on the spot his intention of acting upon it without delay. This he did that very night ; and, after posting the manuscript, returned to the comfortable little parlour above the shop, where, throwing himself into his favourite chair, he surrendered himself to enjoyment of the delicious glow of self-satisfaction which pleasurable anticipation of distinctions to be won had conjured up.

No matter how highly he might esteem himself in consequence of his fellow-members' adulation, not the slightest trace of intellectual arrogance

was admitted into his bearing during shop hours. Between the taking-down and the putting-up of his shutters, he presented to all the habitual demeanour of the cheerful, respectful, customer-retaining tradesman that he was.

No sooner, however, was the shop closed, than he assumed the air of a savant. Was he not in daily expectancy of receiving, as a contributor to the *Pantheon*, the hall-mark of a literary man? Of the acceptance of his article he entertained not the slightest doubt. As he explained one night at the close of business to Miss Holland, his book-keeper, its inherent interest, apart from its form, was too great for the *Pantheon* to ignore. The worst the Editor might do would be to ask him to re-write it, embodying suggested alterations; or to request his permission to have the fruits of his research written up by a member of his staff. His manner at our meetings now assumed an unwonted assertiveness which was good-naturedly indulged by the more sensible of our members; while towards Jackson, the book-seller in the High Street, whom he privately scorned for availing himself of the privileges of membership, as he thought, from motives of pure expediency, he behaved almost arrogantly. At night he would sit over his glass of gin and water in the cosy little back parlour of the "George", and inveigle an unwary guest into a chat, during which he would make skilful moves to elicit from his companion some remark which might provide an opening for him casually to observe, "I dabble a little in literature myself. An occasional article in the literary Press, you know!" And then out would come his precious discovery.

When five days elapsed without acknowledgment from the *Pantheon*, he wrote again to the Editor, enclosing another stamped and addressed envelope, saying that he feared the delay might have arisen owing to his previous envelope having been mislaid. At length, after about two weeks' waiting, arrived a self-directed packet. The familiarity of the hand in which it was addressed, and the bulkiness of the package, caused him no qualms, assuring himself, as he did, that this was customary, the envelope probably containing his manuscript accompanied by a request for final additions and corrections.

There happened to be a meeting of the Society that very night; and great was the depression in every soul, with the solitary exception perhaps of the slighted and mercenary Jackson, when Batters announced the astounding news that his article had been rejected by the *Pantheon*. Sorely as we all felt the slight reflected on the Society through one of its leading lights, we were all satisfied, after we had seen a portion of the letter which had accompanied the rejected manuscript, that our hero had suffered no ignominious defeat. This letter, inscribed in enormous sprawling characters, opened as follows:

"Dear Sir,—I regret I am unable to use the enclosed MS., and therefore return it with many thanks. The arguments put forward are certainly ingenious, and I would have felt inclined to print it, . . ."

Here the sheet ended, the other half, having been detached, as the recipient informed us, at the request of Mrs. Batters who at the time of its receipt was closing a letter to her niece, a keen autograph collector, whom she thought to please by enclosing the autograph of so distinguished a personage as the Editor of the *Pantheon*. Anyway we gathered from what remained of the letter that the article had certainly impressed the Editor ; and several members suggested to Batters that he should send it off right away to another periodical. This, however, he declined to do, remarking, very nobly we all thought at the time, that if the *Pantheon* was not fully satisfied with the evidence advanced—this he gave us to understand was the purport of the missing half of the letter—neither was he himself ; and that though a certain other periodical, almost the equal in eminence to the *Pantheon*, would doubtless be only too pleased to publish his article, he would rather support his contention with any further evidence which might come to hand, before re-submitting it elsewhere.

The following day came the sequel. My wife having asked me to call at Batters' shop on my way back through Town, and to bring home a small packet of spice, I performed my errand. On delivering the packet to her, I noticed some writing on the paper cover, and in one of those vulgar lapses to which the best of us are at times prone, I removed and examined it more closely, discovering it to be a half sheet of note paper, containing these words :—

“ . . . had it not occurred to me that ‘ Ed. M.’ surely stood for ‘ Editor, *Mirror*.’

Yours faithfully,

The Editor.”

SIEGFRIED SASOON'S POETRY

By EDMUND BLUNDEN

THE prevailing trouble of poetic characters appears to be an inability to vary from the strict business of inspiration, or what is presumed to be pure poetry. Shadwell, we know, never deviated into sense; but there are those talented singers who never deviate into nonsense. "Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying" has latterly erected for itself wire fences and warnings against trespass. The pretence of emancipation has actually been part of the process of enclosure. "I am now going to create new forms," says the modern poet, "I shall be very busy for some time. High is our calling. I have the call. I have no leisure to pursue anything except the essential, which I am bound to reveal." From such notions it arises that much new verse is monotonous, unsubstantial, and irrelevant; it does not comfort, but burn; it does not burn with ardour, but with coldness. One is reminded of the proverbial blind man's hunt in a dark room for a needle which is not there.

If the brevity and agreeable imperfection of life argue against any overestimate of serious activities, even the writing of poetry, and demand a full use of the passions and characteristics, they do not exonerate the artist from perfecting his method and his equipment. The theorist who, stern as the lady missionary of Chinese cartoons, stalks on towards his Holy Grail in a rarefied stylistic atmosphere, does not always succeed in avoiding the ditch. His bluer blues and flatter flats are not habitually so accomplished as they might be. Rhythm and verbal suggestion are old mysteries, and do not yield themselves instantly to the most select determination of neophytes. Intensity of insight even is not sure to produce a poem likely to live unless the writer experiencing it has grown into a certainty of poetic style, a certainty implying not one sole avenue of verse, but a system of routes capable of many possibilities, and branches. The charities, the aspirations, the illusions, the situations of our general humanity are now, as ever, the grand influences to which a poet must be unstrainedly responsive; yet all those may not awaken a compelling clearness and freshness of poetry in him without a comparable openness of feeling in the region of language and presentation.

Of those distinguished writers who have displayed, retained, enlarged an openness of judgment in new poetry, and who have made discoveries for themselves without the onset of hallucinations menacing all that had been previously regarded, Siegfried Sassoon is the brightest example. At the moment, perhaps, it is necessary to insist that Mr. Sassoon, the author of a prose work acclaimed everywhere, is first and foremost a poet. The *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, that endlessly intuitive and gleaming retrospect, is not only a prose masterpiece; it is the proof, the double-sure assurance of the qualifications of Mr. Sassoon as poet. It has pleased two races of men—those who did not catch its subtler beckonings,

and those who did. "Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge." Mr. Sassoon has acted on that far-reaching advice—simplicity is the mother of variety. We stand on our side of the corner, and if we remain friends with simplicity we have a feeling for the blind side. What poetry may be in a full definition I am not sure; but I believe that it includes a special instinct for the other sides of the corners of circumstance. There are no dead shadows, empty silences, blank unchartable continents for a faculty of intellectual and spiritual affection such as that which is found in Mr. Sassoon.

There is, in the volume called *The Heart's Journey*, a brief but extremely fruitful poem, in which Mr. Sassoon gives his own picture of the sympathies involved in the poetic sympathy, the sources of the various curiosity supplying the imaginative experience:

In me, past, present, future meet
To hold long chiding conference.
My lusts usurp the present tense
And strangle Reason in his seat.
My loves leap through the future's fence
To dance with dream-enfranchised feet.

In me the cave-man claps the seer,
And garlanded Apollo goes
Chanting to Abraham's deaf ear.
In me the tiger sniffs the rose.
Look in my heart, kind friends, and tremble,
Since there your elements assemble.

These are not all the elements which in concentration or in single recurrence produce the groundwork of Mr. Sassoon's poetry, and command for it that abundance of interest and ease of transition from one sphere to another which we seek in vain through so much neological verse. But these seem like the chieftains of his "force of all arms." It is his good fortune always to understand that man cannot wholly understand, to accept the ins and outs of the prodigious current of evolution, and to possess accordingly an impulsive and humorous freedom.

This statement may be voted incorrect by some readers who, as most of us did, first met the poems of Mr. Sassoon during the European War. Few volumes of our time have been the subject of more animated discussion than the widely read *Counter-Attack*. Now that we are able to review our war again without terrible dreams and distorting projections of formerly unsuspected prejudice, it may be hoped that *Counter-Attack* will find out many readers still. It does not offer, or pretend to offer, what is ridiculously advertised as "all the war," neither does it make all other war books unnecessary. But for certain times and seasons and figures and forces of battle, Mr. Sassoon was and is the unsurpassed spokesman. Deferring this theme for a moment, let us revert to the question how far *Counter-Attack* contradicts the observation that humour is one of Mr. Sassoon's inalienable angels.

Then let us revert to 1917 and 1918 ; to a feverish, tired, bloodstained, brainsick world ; to those frenzied shrieks to heaven, and more dangerous silences. It is difficult now. Even in peace there are individual battle-fields and defeats which have no compensating adventure, no classic touch. But by 1917 the adventure and the classic touch were considerably worn out in the man-eating clay of the Somme, and the fatherless parlours of "Corons de maisons," and Love Lane, and Marktstrasse. There were many hundred thousand men in France and Flanders alone who had emerged from attack into attack, and then into the next attack, well aware that they must become one morning mere heaps in oozing shell-holes, or bundles on the barbed wire. And still most of these men, obedient, unassuming, mute as Spartans, were expected to smile :

Are we down-hearted ?

NO———.

Think we shall win ?

No answer. But beyond these, in their unimaginable imprisonment, there were those hysterical cries and that savage silence devoted to a very much unknown God labelled Victory. In these Satanically laughable conditions of human misunderstanding (and here I write from a particular hatred of the period and the agonies of the Passchendaele illusion), a poet was found with the strength of mind to sacrifice everything, even the traditions of poetry, even his whole artistic plan, in order that he might make audible and intelligible in England and elsewhere the weeping Truth :

He went and said it very clear,

He went and shouted it in their ear.

Such emphasis was essential. *Counter-Attack* was what its double-barrelled title said it was. It was a gun let off at the universal enemy with grim jokes chalked on some of the shells—but the time did not admit of many such jokes. It was an individual's endeavour, under a conviction that things were going from bad to worse, to pull the line of civilisation together.

In order to carry out this step towards reformation, several kinds of warlike stories, several tactical ideas were needed. Most important of all was the provision of a Natural History of the War—

a monster of such frightful mien

As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;

and, for that point, a profusion of absurdity was already circulated everywhere, even in the trenches. We smile at mediaeval bestiaries, at man-serpents and mountain-whales ; but between 1914 and 1917 there had been some popular errors about the face and appetites of War, just as chimerical. Then came Mr. Sassoon. He ejected the chimaera :

The place was rotten with dead ; green clumsy legs

High-booted, sprawled and grovelled along the saps ;

And trunks, face downward, in the sucking mud,

Wallowed like trodden sand-bags loosely filled ;

And naked sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
 Bulged, clotted heads slept in the plastering slime.
 And then the rain began—the jolly old rain !

A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
 Staring across the morning blear with fog ;
 He wondered when the Allemands would get busy ;
 And then, of course, they started with five-nines
 Traversing, sure as fate, and never a dud.
 Mute in the clamour of shells he watched them burst
 Spouting dark earth and wire with gusts from hell,
 While posturing giants dissolved in drifts of smoke.

In such passages, the usual surprising power of the imaginative temperament is exceeded. It is, as one looks back, bewildering that a human being should retain such sensibility in that burning fiery furnace.

Besides presenting the portrait of War, the poet of *Counter-Attack* gave us something which at that time was becoming almost as strange—the recollected charm of Peace. In this subject Mr. Sassoon had shown his understanding and his typical union of familiar and unfamiliar matters, realistic and fanciful, on several occasions. The first sonnet in a quarto volume privately printed for him twenty years ago—what a Young Poet he was, and is !—would alone entitle him to remembrance among those many Englishmen who have answered the “ nods and becks ” of thrilling tranquillity with an added pleasantness. It is such a beautiful, natural song of personality and England's meaning that I shall include it here :

Come in this hour to set my spirit free
 When earth is no more mine though night goes out,
 And stretching forth these arms I cannot be
 Lord of winged sunrise and dim Arcady ;
 When fieldward boys far off with clack and shout
 Still scare the birds away in sudden rout,
 Come ere my heart grows old, and filled with doubt,
 In passional summer dawns I call for thee.

When the first lark goes up to look for day,
 And morning glimmers out of dreams, come then,
 A shadow amid shadows ; over grey
 Wide misty wealds to bring me on my way :
 For I am lone, a dweller among men,
 Hunger'd for what my heart shall never say.

It was not merely the mystical intimacies of solitude that Mr Sassoon made poetic. He saw other glories, which are mostly accepted without honour ; and by the time that he was writing *The Old Huntsman* (a book which should be reprinted as it stood first) and *Counter-Attack*, he called up these equally with more visionary. Still it was

Come down from heaven to meet me ;

still he invoked the inheritances of

all the beauty that has been,
And stillness from the pools of Paradise.

But he made us perceive the values of old and then savagely annihilated commonplaces ; his range of feeling created such truthful, humorous, pathetic reminders as the well-known *Dreamers*, namely you and me :

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

Sometimes the pity of war, the pastoral dream, the joke between friends, the smiling philosophy were harmonized into one Sassoonian comment, as in *The Investure* :

God with a Roll of Honour in His hand
Sits welcoming the heroes who have died,
While sorrowless angels ranked on either side
Stand easy in Elysium's meadow-land.
Then *you* come shyly through the garden gate,
Wearing a blood-soaked bandage on your head ;
And God says something kind because you're dead,
And homesick, discontented with your fate

Without a strong and Elian humour this sort of poem, and all its changes of note and colour, could never have been written.

But the urgency of the world's misery called for another tone, besides these ; and *Counter-Attack* employed a type of sarcastic verse which Mr. Sassoon developed for the particular case. He struck out with mockery of the apathy, or false ardours, of the period :

Does it matter ?—losing your legs ? . . .

He made poetry talk over the telephone, “ to any dead officer ” :

Our Politicians swear
They won't give in till Prussian Rule's been trod
Under the Heel of England. . . . Are you there ?
Yes . . . and the War won't end for at least two years ;
But we've got stacks of men. . . . I'm blind with tears,
Staring into the dark. Cheero !
I wish they'd killed you in a decent show.

Nothing is more certain than that Mr. Sassoon himself realized the difference, in the way of essential poetry, between these searing colloquial verses of desperation and the full-toned lyrics, the delicately profound descriptions and interpretations which his nature could and should be comprised in. But then, as ever in less precipitous style, he refused to regard “ pure poetry ” as the sole business of a poet. Mr. Sassoon,

standing with admirable reverence before the mysteries which sometimes vouchsafe us the inevitable achievement, may be seen with his notebook ready for the prosaically amusing or detached detail. It does not concern him whether what he writes can all pass the tricky turnstiles of higher criticism into the pantheon of the selected sublime and absolute intense.

Among the subordinate verse-moods of Mr. Sassoon ("let the music of them be recreational"), I have always found an invincible happiness in the conversation poems which are agreeably represented as the expressions of a slightly awkward individual not quite sure whether he is trespassing, but amiably observing as much as the authorities permit. I like Mr. Sassoon with his notebook better than the austere finalists with the most recent psychological manuals. He has a knack of discovering places on earth and in heaven which they miss, as he "arrives obscurely pondering on the past, Sententious thus . . ." When, in 1926, Mr. Sassoon put forth a collection of his whims and oddities, it met with less likable caprices on the part of reviewers, who assailed him for not succeeding as a satirist. Yet his book was not called, nor could it be, a volume of satires. His title was *Satirical Poems*. Flogging the town, in the style of Juvenal or Charles Churchill, demands a degree of ferocity and a self-certainty which he would not claim. His sense is rather, even in his indignation, "There, but for the grace of God . . ." He is anxious to make all allowances, and look the other way at least the first occasion :

Fountains upheave pale plumes against the sky,
Murmuring, "Their Majesties came sauntering by—
Was it but yesterday?" . . . Proud fountains sigh
Toward the long glades in golden foliage clad,
"Kurfursts could do no wrong." . . . And the woods reply,
"Take them for what they were, they weren't so bad."

While he walks in his quietly expectant and cheerfully enquiring easiness about the nooks and corners of civilisation, Mr. Sassoon receives very vividly the impression of event, character, environment and change-fulness. He perceives atmosphere revealing itself in images, in living personations of the past, the present, and time to come. He often tells us his imaginative story with a beguiling ambiguity, an inimitable private gesture which explains that he is sure he is only guessing, and is happy in his pastime. He whistles while he sets up his colonnades and invents his masks of history :

"Of course you saw the Villa d'Este Gardens,"
Writes one of my Italianistic friends.
Of course ; of course ; I saw them in October,
Spired with pinaceous ornamental gloom
Of that arboreal elegy the cypress.

Those fountains, too, "like ghosts of cypresses"—
(The phrase occurred to me while I was leaning
On an old balustrade ; imbibing sunset ;

Wrapped in my verse vocation)—how they linked me
 With Byron, Landor, Liszt, and Robert Browning ! . . .
 A *Liebestraum* of Liszt cajoled my senses.
 My language favoured Landor, chaste and formal.
 My intellect (though slightly in abeyance)
 Functioned against a Byronistic background.
 Then Browning jogged my elbow ; bade me hob-nob
 With some forgotten painter of dim frescoes
 That haunt the Villa's intramural twilight.

While roaming in the Villa d'Este Gardens
 I felt like that . . . and fumbled for my note-book.

If the universe is planned by the Deity sometimes depicted in Mr. Sassoon's filial verse, then the elder poets look on their successors with regard and hope ; and it would be perhaps Coleridge, and Landor, and Edward Fitzgerald who are " watching with no small interest " the rich though unpretentious " satirical poems " of Mr. Sassoon.

Under that nonchalance of bearing, magnificence of mind is found. We deplore the barrenness of the imaginative faculty in our time, the absence of the seer and the watch-tower ; but in Mr. Sassoon's work there are passages on the grand scale. Such is the Greek-drama beginning of the prelude to *Counter-Attack*, withdrawing the veil of night and of ignorance from the line of battle :

Dim, gradual thinning of the shapeless gloom
 Shudders to drizzling daybreak that reveals
 Disconsolate men who stamp their sodden boots
 And turn dulled, sunken faces to the sky
 Haggard and hopeless.

Such, again, is the marshalling and march-past of old actions in the autumn afternoon at Blenheim Palace :

In wars which burst before the South Sea Bubble
 Muskets explode, hussars and pike-men plunder,
 While Churchill, stimulating martial trouble,
 Perturbs Palatinates with smoke and thunder. . . .

More spacious still is the last of the *Satirical Poems*, the reanimation of the legend of Apollo and Daphne under the images of " Solar Eclipse." It contains at once the supposed event, the enthusiasm of ancient and lost minds, and the colours thrown on later ages from that mythology :

Daphne turns
 At the wood edge in bronze and olive gloom :
 Sickness assails the sun, whose blazing disc
 Dwindles : the Eden of those auburn slopes
 Lours in the tarnished copper of eclipse.

Yet virgin, in her god-impelled approach
 To Graeco-Roman ravishment, she waits

While the unsated python slides to crush
 Her lust-eluding fleetness. Envious Jove
 Rumbles Olympus. All the classic world
 Leans breathless toward the legend she creates.
 From thunderous vapour smites the immortal beam. . .
 Then, crowned with fangs of foliage, flames the god.

In earlier days, Mr. Sassoon found his poems in the observation of country life more frequently than he appears to do now. Indeed, one of the sonnets in *The Heart's Journey* is farewell to the delight he once had in natural influences and contacts :

Alone, I hear the wind about my walls. . . .
 Wind of the city night, south-west and warm—
 Rain-burdened wind, your homely sound recalls
 Youth ; and a distant country-side takes form,
 Comforting with memory-sight my town-taxed brain. . . .
 Wind from familiar fields and star-tossed trees,
 You send me walking lonely through dark and rain
 Before I'd lost my earliest ecstasies. . . .

It is not unlikely that this farewell is only for a time ; strange, should that fountain which has played in many melodies and freshening dispensations through all Mr. Sassoon's verse hitherto, fail to rise in his spirit now. If this were to happen, the Nature-pages already secure in his work would be already considerable enough. No more delicate sense than his is found in contemporary verse for the simple thanksgiving to some wise Wonder implicit in beautiful description. The art of honour in poetry is against "long prayers" ; it dwells in attentiveness of body and soul, in the devoted and matured recording of the way in which Nature moves :

Out in the night there's autumn-smelling gloom
 Crowded with whispering trees ; across the park
 A hollow cry of hounds like lonely bells :
 And I know that the clouds are moving across the moon ;
 The low, red, rising moon. Now herons call
 And wrangle by their pool ; and hooting owls
 Sail from the wood above pale stooks of oats.

Mr. Sassoon is a poet able to be judged either by complete compositions or by short fragments, single lines, in which his fantasy and imagination unite ; his renderings of Nature shine in the briefest quotation :

The old horse lifts his face and thanks the light. . . .

Tossed on the glittering air they soar and skim,
 Whose voices make the emptiness of light
 A windy palace. . . .

Voices heard through veils and faces blind
 To the kind light of my autumnal gleanings.

Withdrawing from the external and physical aspects of things for a

time, Mr. Sassoon has latterly been allured to poems chiefly lyrical by a mystical simplicity underlying the spectacle of activity and power. *The Heart's Journey* represents this calm sequestered phase of his poetical work. By its contents the reader may readily discover that Mr. Sassoon travels, according to the chances of experience and temperament, *autour de sa chambre* ; the scene is no more lavish, for the greater part of the book, than "a midnight interior," but the poet's walls vanish into the wide expanses of intuition on the given word of a secret messenger. Nor is the word laden with fear or discord. The original confidence of Mr. Sassoon in the nature of things has returned in a new light ; the early world of flowers has been transformed into something akin to Vaughan's benediction, "Heaven's Lily and the earth's chaste Rose." The likeness of his idea to that of Vaughan, and his desire that it might become more and more radiant in him, animated his perfect sonnet at Vaughan's grave. But Mr. Sassoon's private hymns and utterances of the undying brightness have their own unborrowed qualities :

Let there be life, said God. And what He wrought
Went past in myriad marching lives, and brought
This hour, this quiet room, and my small thought
Holding invisible vastness in its hands.

Let there be God, say I. And what I've done
Goes onward like the splendour of the sun
And rises up in rapture and is one
With the white power of conscience that commands.

Let life be God. . . . What wail of fiend or wraith
Dare mock my glorious angel where he stands
To fill my dark with fire, my heart with faith ?

The sense of the infinite does indeed, for the writer of those lines, "roll through all things." Even his most reserved and haunted hour is busy with the sound of the mortal drama. He speaks of his revelation with a warmth of gratitude, and the listener is aware not of some distant marvel but of the ticking clock, the "patient lamp," the rumour of late traffic, and a deep devotion suddenly filling all the place. Few of us are spiritually rich enough to refuse this generous piety,

granting strength to find
From lamp and flower simplicity of mind.

Apart from his poems in conversational style, Mr. Sassoon has the faculty of making his work lyrical. His sonnets are songs, his epigrams even have their music. His best known piece is that cry of release in 1919 :

Everyone suddenly burst out singing ;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields ; on ; on ; and out of sight.

Occasionally he, like all the poets in less anxious times, allows verse to take shape for their sound rather than their significance. He is one of the disciplinarians of words, but he now and then gives a holiday and lets them combine in some pleasant dance "for music":

Whence you came I cannot tell ;
Only—with your joy you start
Chime on chime from bell on bell
In the cloisters of my heart.

There, to be sure, no ambitious meaning is intended. As Shenstone, that brilliant amateur of critical observation, said long ago, a certain flimsiness is necessary to a song. The melody is the thing, and Mr. Sassoon calls up the despised "sentimental" adjective and the rejected idyllic convention with enthusiasm if they appear best for his cadences. His catholicity of values does not fail to characterize the expression, as well as the occasion, of his verse. He will not lightly dismiss any established term or form.

The preparedness of the verbal and metrical artist, which was named above as an unalterable condition of fresh poetical achievements, always has been part of his powers. He can never have fallen into the attractive error of fancying his chance without mastering the principles. The peculiar assurance which in poetics as in war leads into bottomless pits—"It'll all be all right on the night"—never left him floundering. Prior to the access of his poetical concentrations, due method of language, of rhythm and rhyme or its related groups of sound awaited his discovery of new worlds to conquer. He has not forgotten the old jingle of the writing-master, easily transferable to the calligraphy of poetry:

Take great care,
And you'll write fair ;

not that he finally appears as a somewhat frightened and suppressed compiler of correct phrase and measure. He calls us on with a beautiful quickness, he sustains us with a deeper consonance—the preservation of old ways which are still excellent for their purpose, blending with the innovation required by new turns of feeling, opinion and incident.

In illustration of this fineness in Mr. Sassoon's art of poetry, one or two matters easily suggest themselves. First, he has made an especial friend of the alexandrine, the "needless alexandrine" which has generally been driven away from the doors of English verse without a hope. As it suits our living speech, Mr. Sassoon has readily brought it into respectability. It drags no wounded length along as it impresses its trust on us:

"Pass it along, the wiring party's going out"—
And yawning sentries mumble, "Wirers going out."
Unravelling ; twisting ; hammering stakes with muffled thud,
They toil with stealthy haste and anger in their blood.

And again, with increased accomplishment in tones and variations:

We forget our fear. . . .
And, while the uncouth Even begins to lour less near,

Discern the mad magnificence whose storm-light throws
 Wild shadows on these after-thoughts that send your brain
 Back beyond Peace, exploring sunken ruinous roads.
 Your brain, with files of flitting forms hump-backed with loads,
 On its own helmet hears the tinkling drops of rain,—
 Follows to an end some night-relief, and strangely sees
 The quiet no-man's-land of daybreak, jagg'd with trees
 That loom like giant Germans. . . .

I'll go with you, then. . . .

Another of his revitalizing technical capacities concerns vocabulary. When he is in his mood of satirical perception, he is inventive of a remarkable series of new worlds, in which he unerringly coadunates (the manner is infectious !) the sublime and the ridiculous. Moreover, in order to banter us still more amusingly and fantastically, he often causes these to run an obstacle-race of extraordinary rhyming. *Satirical Poems* is one long masterpiece of this dexterous wit of form, this parody of intellectual tabulation :

Putting aside enigmas of technique,—
 In calm cynosural canvases I seek
 Some psycho-coefficient unconfessed. . . .
 A glum (though lingually-exempted) guest,
 I analyse the output ; which includes
 Complacent persons opulently poised
 In unawareness that their names are noised
 In highbrow cliques as "psychologic nudes."

Putting aside the other enigmas of discriminating the merits of Mr. Sassoon's verse in critical jargon, I may sum up my view very briefly. We have in him a poet of considerable productiveness, but no way inclined to scuffle for novelty or occasion ; he writes as he is impelled. His impulses are abundant, for they come from an eagerness in daily contact, in deeper contemplation, in thoughts that are borne from beyond the horizon. His expression is vivid, for he believes in the life rather than the death of man's patiently enlarged means of communication ; he has a gift of music, the charm which overrules the rest in poetry. Mr. Sassoon is, and has long been, an English poet answering the demands of tradition and leading the way for the progressive sensibility. It may not be the least valuable thing to note that his work is as *readable* as it is copious ; and, if it failed in reflection of the unseen, it would still be fertile in its pictures and estimates of ourselves. But it does not fail in its heavenward correspondences. It is lit with promises and beamings of sunrise beyond chronology.

SOME REMARKS ON TOLSTOY

By D. S. MIRSKY

THE hundredth anniversary of Tolstoy's birth has been the occasion for numerous publications, the most important of which are the centenary editions of his complete works. The monumental edition of his complete works started by the Soviet State Press will contain about ninety volumes and will be a rival to the complete editions of Voltaire and Goethe. The English edition, which the Oxford Press* is bringing out for the Tolstoy Society and which is calculated for completion in 1930, will not be so complete. It will not include the greater part of his religious and moral tracts ; nor his diaries and correspondence ; nor the posthumous work that was not included in the edition of 1911. It will, however, when completed, give an adequate idea of Tolstoy the literary artist, and a less complete, but, for the general reader, quite sufficient idea of Tolstoy the moral philosopher.

The essential feature of recent talk about Tolstoy, in this country at least, is not, however, any increase of interest in the novelist and the thinker. The only important critical discussion of Tolstoy's novels I know of to have appeared in English in the course of the centenary year stands in no connection with that date, and is contained in Mr. Edwin Muir's excellent little book on the novel in general (one of the *Hogarth Lectures* series). It is Tolstoy the man whom the centenary celebrations have brought into the limelight. The sensational publication of the year was the *Diary of Countess Tolstoy*. Before being published in book form (Gollancz), parts of it appeared in *The Spectator*, and thus reached a very wide audience. All recent English utterances on Tolstoy have been coloured by impressions received from the *Diary*. Its effect has certainly been very greatly to damage the reputation of Tolstoy as a moral character. The translator and editor of the *Diary* must be exonerated from all premeditated intention to produce such an effect. In fact he was very careful to point out in his introduction that its entries were few and far apart and that Countess Tolstoy had recourse to it only when she felt particularly unhappy. Unfortunately, few people read introductions. The righteous disgust of English readers with Tolstoy as revealed by his wife's diary found its principal expression in an article by Miss Rebecca West which appeared in *Time and Tide* and which was given editorial comment in the January number of THE LONDON MERCURY. Miss West's savage outburst is exceedingly interesting in so far as it illustrates a prevailing type of Anglo-Saxon feminine mentality, but as an ethical judgment it can have no

* Tolstoy Centenary Edition. The Works of Tolstoy, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude. For the Tolstoy Society. Oxford University Press. London. Humphrey Milford. Nine guineas for 21 volumes. (Volumes out : Vol. I. *The Life of Tolstoy: First Fifty Years*, by Aylmer Maude ; vol. 3. *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* ; vol. 13. *Twenty-Three Tales* ; vol. 17. *Plays* ; vol. 18. *What is Art ? and Essays on Art* ; vol. 19. *Resurrection*).

significance whatsoever, until the psychological factors that conditioned Miss West's reaction are themselves analysed and discounted. This I do not intend to do, as Miss West is alive and consequently taboo, while Tolstoy is dead and delivered to his critics bound and naked. The problem of Tolstoy's morals, or rather of his psychological type, remains of enormous importance, quite apart from the reactions it may arouse in an English authoress. I have no intention to solve it or even to suggest a solution in the present remarks. What I wish to do is merely to point out some elements of this vexed and complicated problem that do not appear to have received the attention they are entitled to.

In calling the problem of Tolstoy complicated, I do not imply that he was a particularly complex character. There was no very great variety of ingredients in his personality. He cannot in this sense be compared to Rousseau, to Goethe, to Pushkin, or to Gogol. He was one of the most simply composed of great men. But if there was no very great variety of elements in him, there was none that was not counter-balanced by its opposite. His mind was essentially dialectical, in the Hegelian sense. No part of it but contained in itself a worm of contradiction that could grow up into an antithesis. But, unlike Hegel's system, Tolstoy's mind did not surmount the contradiction of "thesis" and "antithesis" by any synthesis. Instead of Hegel's "triads", Tolstoy was all arranged in a small number of irreducible and intensely hostile "dyads". This fundamental pattern of his mind is of the greatest importance for the understanding of the genesis of his moral philosophy. Dualism is the hall-mark of the ethical man. The essence of ethics is a dualistic pattern, an irreducible opposition between right and wrong or good and evil. As soon as a third element is introduced, as soon as anything *one* is allowed to stand above good and evil, the ethical point of view is adulterated and ultimately lost. Hegel, whose genius created the dialectical triad in which two contradictory starting-points are resolved in a pacifying synthesis, was inevitably impelled towards the thesis that is the negation of all ethics: All that is has a justification (*Alles was ist, ist vernünftig*). Tolstoy remained ethical to the end, that is to say in a permanent state of war with himself.

The first contradiction inside Tolstoy is the contradiction between his intense egotism and his intense awareness of the outer world. As a rule the egotist—or to use the psycho-analytic term, the Narcissus—is not concerned with the outer world for its own sake. He is entirely introverted and builds himself a universe of his own, projecting into the outer world the patterns of his own imagination. This, if sufficiently sublimated and refined, is the type of the idealist and the Platonist. Shelley is the most striking example I know of. If the Narcissus is extraverted he becomes the man of action whose knowledge of the outer world may be extensive and thorough, but remains entirely practical, entirely a function of his action, entirely subordinated to his egotistic interest. Then we have the self-centred hero, Napoleon or Mr. Winston Churchill. Tolstoy was neither a Shelley, nor a Mr. Churchill. The world existed for him most

emphatically ; he saw it not as a glorious pageant of Shelleyan clouds and skylarks, but with the scientific precision of the best Zeiss glasses. Neither was his concern in it subordinated, like Napoleon's, to action. In practical life Tolstoy was a disinterested man, and by no means particularly practical (though I would not endorse Mr. Shaw's verdict that he was a baby in all matters except literature ; this judgment—contained in an article reproduced in Vol. I of the centenary edition—is just an ordinary Shavian exaggeration). That an egotist and a Narcissus should have written *War and Peace*, the very type and the highest achievement of objective literature, is a paradox which would be enough in itself to mark the author as an exceptionally contradictory person.

That Tolstoy was a Narcissus, however, there can be no reasonable doubt. His egotism stares one in the face from every page of his *Diaries* ; it is no less obvious in that tragic attempt to overcome it—*Resurrection*. It is strikingly apparent in the great stories, which I firmly believe to be the greatest religious writings of modern times ; that in the *Death of Ivan Ilyich* and in *Master and Man* the overcoming of man's Narcissian watertightness to man should be presented as possible only in a supreme experience before the face of death, and as a miraculous and mystical intervention of the Divine, is the strongest proof of the fundamental and irreducible nature of Tolstoy's egotism. The doctrinaire and intolerant nature of his teaching was a direct outcome of his Narcissism. It is natural for a Narcissus to believe that he alone is in possession of truth. The truth he believes himself to be in possession of may change from year to year as it did in the case of Tolstoy (before he finally stabilized it after 1880), but that did not make him less intolerant. This intolerance, this sincere assurance that he possessed the truth (even when it was different from the truth he possessed a year ago) is nowhere more curiously apparent than in his love-letters to Valeria Arsenieva (English translation, Hogarth Press). This episode with Mlle. Arsenieva, which is exceedingly illuminating for the understanding of Tolstoy, became the starting-point for his (relatively little known) novel *Family Happiness*. The relation between the affair and the novel has been studied by P. Pavlov (*Slavonic Review*, December, 1928) who has brought together all the material to prove that Tolstoy has to be classified by the psycho-analyst as a typical Narcissus. Valeria was a superficial and frivolous girl, more interested in hats and dancing than in ethical ideals, and this made her proof against the seductions of Tolstoy. She grew impatient of his pedagogical tone, jilted him, and a few months later married another. Tolstoy was profoundly hurt by these developments. To cure his wound he wrote *Family Happiness*, in which he sets things right by inventing a Valeria of his own who, though she is quite like the real Valeria, is made to behave in a more agreeable way. Instead of getting bored by his moral exactions, the fictitious Valeria does her best to please him, and finishes by becoming a good wife. Sophie Behrs, who became Countess Tolstoy, lacked Valeria's armour of frivolity, and when she fell in love with Tolstoy—who was to her already a great

writer (it should never be lost sight of that she was literary through and through and no less addicted to introspection than Tolstoy himself), she found herself defenceless before the much more gigantic egotism of her husband. In relation to her, perhaps, the only time in his life, was Tolstoy the active and practical egotist. For literature was not, as Mr. Shaw would have it, the only field of activity in which he was not a baby—there was at least one other—sex.

The principal charge brought against Tolstoy by his recent accusers is that of cruelty, and in the first instance, cruelty to his wife. That his behaviour did occasionally result in cruelty can hardly be denied. The episode of the words of apology which he scratched out of his wife's diary has been given particular notoriety. There are occasions too, where he showed himself singularly callous when the Countess was with child or nursing a baby. The publication of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, in which he utilized for literary purposes his intimate relations with his wife, was also certain to cause pain to her. These cases are so flagrant that some have even applied to Tolstoy the word Sadism. This is misleading. A Sadist is one who finds positive pleasure in causing pain to another. Dostoevsky was a Sadist. This does not mean that in actual life he revelled in causing pain to women. The only positive indication that he did—the famous letter of Strakhov to Tolstoy which takes a place in Dostoevsky's dossier similar to some of Countess Tolstoy's entries in Tolstoy's—is distinctly suspect. Dostoevsky's Sadism was repressed and sublimated. Its most conspicuous form is the cult of suffering, in which the enjoyment of another's pain is "sublimated" into an adoration of the sufferer. The amount of suffering in Dostoevsky's novels, the extraordinary power with which it is conveyed and calculated to cause the reader actual and intense moral pain, was the valve through which the Sadism of Dostoevsky was transformed into something relatively innocuous. Tolstoy did not delight in suffering. In the great scenes of *War and Peace* where he describes the horror of pre-anaesthetic surgery (especially the operation on Anatole Kuragin), what impresses him and the reader, is not pain as such, but the degradation of the human body implied in it; the basic reaction is a shudder that "this same thing might happen to me"—the characteristic reaction of a Narcissus. Another passage that well illustrates Tolstoy's reaction to cruelty and to another's pain is one of his later stories—*After the Dance*—where on the morning after the ball he sees a colonel, the father of the girl he is half in love with and who had been the soul of innocent merriment on the night before, supervising and directing the inhumanly brutal flogging of a soldier. Tolstoy's reaction is a physical nausea which passes into a general disgust with existence and the men who thus degrade the moral law. As the story is relatively little known I will quote the passage:

"I looked in the same direction, and saw between the files something horrid approaching me. The thing that approached was a man, stripped to the waist, fastened with cords to the guns of two soldiers who were leading him. At his

side an officer in overcoat and cap was walking, whose figure had a familiar look. The victim advanced under the blows that rained upon him from both sides, his whole body plunging, his feet dragging through the snow. Now he threw himself backward, and the subalterns who led him thrust him forward. Now he fell forward, and they pulled him up short, while ever at his side marched the tall officer, with firm pace. It was Variuka's father, with his rosy face and white moustache. . . .

" . . . Suddenly the colonel stopped, and rapidly approached a man in the ranks. ' I'll teach you to hit him gently,' I heard his furious voice say. ' Will you pat him like that ? Will you ? ' and I saw how his strong hand in the suede glove struck the weak, bloodless, terrified soldier for not bringing down the stick with sufficient strength on the red neck of the Tartar. ' Bring new sticks ! ' he cried, and looking round, he saw me. Assuming an air of not knowing me, and with a ferocious, angry frown, he hastily turned away. I felt so utterly ashamed that I didn't know where to look. It was as if I had been detected in a disgraceful act. I dropped my eyes and quickly hurried home. . . . My heart was full of physical disgust that was almost sickness. So much so that I halted several times on my way, for I had the feeling that I was going to be really sick from all the horrors that possessed me at the sight. I do not remember how I got home and got to bed. But the moment I was about to fall asleep I heard and saw again all that had happened, and I sprang up."

Dostoevsky's reaction would have been to fall on his knees and worship the martyr. Tolstoy's is entirely related to the general idea of flesh that is liable to such degradation, and to the moral law of which he, Tolstoy, is ultimate judge.

In Tolstoy's actual attitude to his wife there was, as in all his experiences an inherent contradiction. Tolstoy's attitude was, to begin with, essentially patriarchal. Sociologically, the patriarchal attitude belongs to the pre-capitalistic age when the human unit was not the individual but the human pair. It was justified by the division of work between the sexes inevitable to the individualistic stage of production that preceded capitalism. In Russia by the second half of the nineteenth century it was almost obsolete among the upper classes. It was (and is) prevalent among the peasants. The general definition of Tolstoy's attitude to life as typically peasant cannot be accepted without very substantial qualifications, but in this particular point it quite answers to the facts. Socially, Tolstoy's attitude to his wife was that of a peasant. Psychologically and sexually, the patriarchal view corresponds to an attitude to the wife as a possession, but a possession that is in very truth part of the owner, " the same flesh," a limb rather than a chattel. Tolstoy was too sophisticated, too educated emotionally, to give a naïve expression to the view. Like everything in him it was big with a contradiction. Hence, moments when he believed in and *lived* the complete identity and union of flesh and mind with his wife alternated with others where he *saw* her living an independent life of her own, escaping his hold, being a person with her own will, not his limb but a detached human being with head and soul complete. It was a moment like this he recorded in the episode of Levin's mad jealousy for Kitty. Moments like these provoked the entries that have so impressed

his critics in his wife's *Diary*. It is altogether significant that the moments of Tolstoy's "cruelty" to his wife so regularly coincide with her pregnancy and nursing times—it is clear that the cause (how subconscious we do not know) of the estrangement that led to these episodes was the husband's jealousy of the child. In this connection we may recall that the *Kreutzer Sonata* was likewise written very soon after the birth of their last child.

It is these moments, and no others, that Countess Tolstoy's *Diary* records. For the others, which were the normal state of relations between the Tolstoy's, we have another document, no less interesting than the Countess's diary, and that is *War and Peace*. One is apt to forget in discussing Tolstoy's sexual morality and sociable virtues, that he was among other things the author of that novel. I do not know of any book on the novel to have appeared in English within the last two years where *War and Peace* does not occupy a place of honour; but there have been plenty of books and articles written about Tolstoy where it is barely, if at all, mentioned. In the present context I am not concerned with the place of *War and Peace* in the literature of the world, but with its relevance to the understanding of the personality of Tolstoy and, incidentally, of his relations with his wife.

War and Peace is the greatest monument left to us by Tolstoy of that "objectivity" that was the antithesis of his Narcissism, and which is conspicuously absent in all Tolstoy's preceding work, and in practically all he wrote after his conversion. By objectivity, I mean the ability to see from the inside persons that are not himself. In the majority of Tolstoy's works the majority of the characters are seen from the outside; those that are seen from the inside can be classified under a few headings: they are either psychological abstractions with no real individuality of their own, little more than mechanical models of "man in general." Such are the men dissected in the *Sevastopol* stories or the horse in *Kholstomer* (who of course is not a horse but a human being), or mechanical dolls (very cleverly made) intended to satirize some type or profession, like the judges in *Resurrection*. Or else they are more or less faithful portraits of Tolstoy himself based on his rich experience in introspection, and which may—if we discount certain deformations composed by literary technique—be utilized as direct evidence of Tolstoy's inner life. Such are the "I" of *Childhood* and its sequels; Olenin in the *Cossacks*; Levin in *Anna Karenina*; Nekhlyudov in *Resurrection*; and Poznyshchev in *The Kreutzer Sonata* (in the last two cases the deformations are particularly great, conditioned in the one case by inability to transform to good use bad initial data; in the other to a certain extent by deliberate camouflage). And, lastly, a third kind of character whom Tolstoy sees from the inside are projections of himself into abstract "men in general." Such are the principal characters in his two greatest religious stories, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and *Master and Man*. But Ivan Ilyich and the merchant in *Master and Man* are not so much characters as abstract frames built to lodge Tolstoy's own particularly significant and particularly ineffable experience. All these people

are thus either Tolstoy himself or human abstractions. In *War and Peace*, on the other hand, by the side of a crowd of characters seen from the outside or of the satirical-puppet variety (Berg, Boris Drubetskoy) we have a relatively small number of people seen from the inside who are not Tolstoy. They include the three male and the two female protagonists—Pierre, Prince Andrew, Nicolas, Princess Marie, and Natasha. The series is prolonged in *Anna Karenina* by the heroine herself, by Vronsky, Dolly and Kitty. In the later work the only characters who might be included are Katyusha Maslova and Fedya Protasov (*The Living Corpse*). I do not think that they can be put on a level with those of the two earlier novels. The genius of the old Tolstoy found expression in other forms—in the rendering of religious experience and in external, nude, almost abstract narrative. It is very largely on the ten or twelve principal characters of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* that Tolstoy's place—a unique place—as a novelist rests, and it is not uninteresting to ask under what conditions the transition from the abstract figures of *Family Happiness*, *Kholstomer*, etc. (written in 1859-61) to the *living* inhabitants of *War and Peace* took place. The answer is simple. It was between the two dates that Tolstoy was married.

The story has often been told of how Countess Tolstoy copied out *War and Peace* from beginning to end seven times. The fact is never omitted in any apology for her. It seems to me that her part in the making of *War and Peace* was more important than that. It was only owing to her that the novel could be written at all. It was not only that sexual stability enabled Tolstoy to feel less self-conscious in his defensive Narcissism (the intensity of his self-consciousness in the preceding work is clearly connected with the obsession he had of being unacceptable to the other sex), and, by making it secure, allowed him to pay less attention to its demands. Marriage was for him an actual window into the world of "the other," an actual possibility to see into another's mind. The becoming one flesh with his wife did not merely result in the inclusion of her into his body-psychic, but gave him direct access to something that was not himself. However great the patriarchal bias of his sexual attitude he was too far off from the real patriarchal bed really to identify himself with his wife. She was "other," and that was that. And that was a first step towards seeing other "others," towards entering human frames that were not his own. It is not without its significance that Tolstoy proceeded on his annexation of the "other" by degrees, as it were, of relationship. Of the five leading characters of *War and Peace*, Andrew and Pierre are very complex, but unmistakable transpositions of Tolstoy himself (*transpositions*, not projections, for which he was only the starting point not the model); Nicholas and Marie are his father and mother; Natasha his sister-in-law (the Countess's sister, Mme. Kuzminsky). This way in which the originally self-contained organism of Narcissus-Tolstoy protrudes its tentacles towards the physically nearest is characteristic not only of his self-centredness, but also of the essential materialism of his outlook. In *Anna Karenina* (where Kitty is the Countess) a further step

is made to penetrate the "other"—Anna and Vronsky are figures entirely detached from Tolstoy's person, and consequently his utmost effort to get out of himself into "the other." But by their side there is the familiar figure of Levin, who is again just Tolstoy himself transferred from fact to fiction.

But if it were his wife who showed him the way into the interior of another mind, the external world had always been an object of interest for Tolstoy, and this leads us to two other fundamental contradictions in him—the contradictions between his materialism and his spiritualism; and between his love of unconscious life and his love of reason. The two pairs are closely connected. But they are not superposable, for the love of unconscious, unreflecting, spontaneous life is equally discernible in the "pagan" yearning for enjoyment of Olenin (*The Cossacks*) and in the religious aspirations of the older Tolstoy (their best literary expression is the story of *Alesha Gorshok*). The fundamental phenomena are, however, his egotism and his materialism. His egotism told him that the end of human life was to be happy. His materialism made him, as long as he was young and strong, seek for happiness in the "simple, sensuous and passionate" things of this world; but, when he was nearer death than birth, then it was to be looked for in a preparation of the mind for a detachment from the earthly, and for a happy and unregretting death. Tolstoy quite frankly "gives himself away" on these points. To many of Tolstoy's readers and followers this may detract from the value of his religious thought. But it is my profound conviction that the contrary is true. It is the organic, inseparable link between his religious experience and his body that makes the former so genuinely, so inevitably significant. We have been too much assured by centuries of false theology that Christianity is a religion of the soul only. Tolstoy, in his subconsciousness, knew better. The intense feeling of flesh, and of the horror of fleshly death is one of the profoundest and truest elements of his religious experience. Afterwards, when the genuine experience that conditioned his conversion gave room to the rational construction we know as the teaching of Tolstoy, this profound religious attachment to the body failed to find expression in the categories of Tolstoy's rationalism. But it left an indirect trace in his obstinate refusal to recognize the immortality of the soul. He had no use for it if it was not inseparable from the immortality of the flesh. It was at the critical period between his conversion and the crystallizing of his religion into a teaching, that he came in contact with the greatest of Russian religious thinkers, Nicolas F. Fedorov, who knew the religious value of the body not with the body's knowledge only (as Tolstoy did), but with the clear consciousness of the mind. Fedorov, who was a saint in the full sense of the word, produced a tremendous impression on Tolstoy, but his French-bred rationalism could not accept the profounder common sense of Fedorov's Christianity, and settled down, we now know, with what lack of subconscious conviction, into that abstract spiritualism that carried his name to all the ends of the Christian and heathen world.*

* The relations of Tolstoy and Fedorov are studied in a highly interesting pamphlet by A. K. Gornostaev, *Before the Face of Death*. (Russian) Editions Eurasie, Paris and Harbin, 1928.

Tolstoy was equally frank in the essentially egotistic character of his religion. In *A Confession* and elsewhere his main argument in favour of his gospel of love and non-resistance was that it is the only way to permanent happiness, that is to say happiness till the hour of Death. The end of life, he taught, was not a preparation for happiness in the next world (which he rejected for reasons I have just dwelt on), but the attainment of happiness in this world by charity and love of our fellow men. Why it was that the teaching of the egotist and materialist, Tolstoy, should take the form of an "ethical Christianity" and extreme altruism, is a big subject which I cannot discuss at all seriously here. I should only like to suggest two partial explanations. Firstly, I believe that Tolstoy's conversion was due to a genuine religious experience of the right sort; afterwards he rationalized the light he had seen in an unsatisfactory way, but the germ remained alive in him. Secondly, passing to more human levels, it would appear that Tolstoy's particular type of "extraverted Narcissism" implies a certain kind of sympathy that can apply to itself the words about "loving one's neighbour as oneself" (by the way Tolstoy very often speaks of the complete intelligibility to himself of the conception of "loving oneself", an idea which no doubt is not immediately clear to any but a Narcissus)—that is to say that the Narcissus may project himself into others and have flash-light revelations of the other man being a very brother in the flesh, and that himself might have been in the other's place. Hence a peculiar kind of sympathy which, though it may have its starting point in a moment of intensest sensation, congeals, when the moment is over, into an abstract, cold and doctrinaire altruism.

One more point. It is often insisted on that Tolstoy was essentially Russian. Mr. Aylmer Maude, for instance, in his preface to *The First Fifty Years*, says that "being a Westerner" he has to make an effort to understand Tolstoy's views. Now there are things in Tolstoy that we may admit, with qualification, to be Russian. His patriarchal and "peasant" mentality are Russian only in so far as Russia has preserved more relics of the pre-capitalistic age than any European country. It may equally well be called Chinese, Indian, or for all I know, Brazilian or Portuguese; twenty-five centuries ago it might have been called Roman or Greek. It belongs to cultural stages, not to cultural types. Another feature which I may, not without a certain amount of self-gratification, admit to be Russian is Tolstoy's intellectual honesty. But here again if intellectual honesty has been a quality encouraged by various social and educational influences in the educated Russian for the last ninety years or so, there is nothing to show that it is in any sense a national rather than a group feature. There is, however, one feature in Tolstoy, and that perhaps the most central, which to my best understanding is definitely un-Russian; that is his egotism and Narcissism, or rather the way in which he utterly submits to them, so that they become what is known in moral theology as spiritual pride. That pride is not a Russian sin, is, I believe, generally admitted.

WILLIAM COBBETT

By J. B. MORTON

LOOK back at the time of transition, when the English peasantry had been torn up by the roots, and you will see, riding down a twisting lane, a sturdy man, with small eyes set in a red face. He looks to right and to left, pausing occasionally to survey a field of hops or to remark a well-built barn. His son, Richard, riding at his side, waits for him to speak. Listen, and you will hear a drawling voice, curiously ill-matched with that strong frame, and with those angry eyes. He is ranting again. He has but now praised the beauty of a landscape and assessed the value of a field of oats—and now he is off once more, cursing the tax-eaters and stock-jobbers. His words have a modern ring, but if we strain our eyes we see the background against which this figure on horseback goes on his way. We see the new enclosures, and ragged, wandering men, displaced by machinery; far away to the north the ugly smoke of the first huge industrial towns.

Against such a background history presents the Peasant Articulate, William Cobbett. To many of his contemporaries he appeared an anachronism, but it was they who were the anachronisms. It was he who remembered, and it was they who forgot. It was they who said that the new way of life was better than the old; it was he who denied it. He was a prophet who had no new story, but a very old one, to tell, and his voice was the voice of the poor men who could not believe that if a machine, worked by one man, threw ninety-nine men out of employment, the ninety-nine ought to be grateful. He did not make the mistake of despising machinery, like the weaker-minded aesthetes, but he saw clearly what might happen if it were to become a master instead of a servant; if it were to fall, permanently, into the wrong hands. Out of this troubled vision he wrote and spoke and acted as the champion of the peasantry; having the soil, as it were, in his blood, and making use of his practical knowledge in sentences that were like blows of the fist. His indignation, always on behalf of others, was red-hot, and had nothing to do with the colder intellectual theories of Ruskin and those others who saw Cobbett's prophecies fulfilled. His concern was not with the blackened sky, but with the starving labourers, and his central idea, round which pivoted all his theories and enthusiasms, was that England was happier as an agricultural country. Everything he had to say throughout his long and vigorous life turned back home to that conviction. It is the refrain of all his logical passages, the peroration of his speeches, the clue to his life. It drove him like a wind.

The whole point about Cobbett is that he was a practical man and not a dreamer. He was not preaching the destruction of an old system, and the trial of some new one. He was preaching the destruction of a new system,

and the return to an old and tried one ; a system that had succeeded in making simple men happy. He spoke for all those who could not forget that they, or their fathers, had been peasants ; who did not wish to remember that they, or their sons, were now factory-hands. If any one of the labourers or farmers who lived during the transition could have uttered his thoughts, his tone would have been the tone of Cobbett, whose very writing has the direct violence and the repetitions and the colloquialisms of angry speech. There never lived a man less guilty of fine writing, save only in his early rhetoric, and on occasions, like that of his appeal for war in 1803, when he did not know what he was talking about.

His rhetoric improved, as anyone may see who compares this pamphlet of 1803 : *Important Considerations for the People of the Kingdom*, with one of his *Tracts*, say, *The Rights of the Poor*. Here, writing at the beginning of his best period, 1821, he gives the reader his moral principles, and forgets his feelings for once.

When he knew what he was talking about, his prose, though ready to break out at any moment into raving and abuse, was, for the most part, admirably ordered ; military, sonorous rather than melodious ; rarely graceful ; lucid, downright. There are long passages, particularly in *Cottage Economy* and in *Advice to Young Men*, which are models of good prose, and illustrate his own axiom, that in writing one should try to put down the thoughts in the order in which they occur, rather than to create an effect by tricks. Here is an example of his downright style, from *Cottage Economy* :

It is notorious that tea has no useful strength in it ; that it contains nothing nutritious ; that it, besides being good for nothing, has badness in it, because it is well-known to produce want of sleep in many cases, and in all cases to shake and weaken the nerves. . . . It does not, in any degree, assist in affording what labour demands. . . . Then comes the great article of all, the time employed in this tea-making affair. It is impossible to make a fire, boil water, make the tea, drink it, wash up the things, sweep up the fire-place and put all to rights again in a less space of time, upon an average, than two hours. . . . By the time that the clattering tea tackle is out of the way, the morning is spoiled ; its prime is gone ; and any work that is to be done afterwards lags heavily along. If the mother has to go out to work, the tea affair must all first be over. She comes into the field in summer time when the sun has gone a third part of its course. She has the heat of the day to encounter instead of having her work done and being ready to return home at an early hour. Yet early she must go, too ; for there is the fire again to be made, the clattering tea tackle again to come forward ; and even in the longest day she must have candle-light, which never ought to be seen in a cottage (except in case of illness) from March to September.

And here is a passage of another sort, but equally characteristic, from the *Political Register* of Nov. 22nd, 1806 :

Whence sprang the Sheridan ? From a play-actor ; from a person of that profession (if it can be called a profession) the followers of which are, in our wise laws,

considered and denominated vagabonds. . . . The prohibition of the exercise of this calling is the rule ; the toleration of it merely the exception ; and most wise is the law, for, if there be any calling lower than all other callings ; if there be any one beyond all comparison the most degrading, is it not that, wherein the operator, for the purpose of obtaining food and raiment, exhibits his person, displays his limbs, and strains his voice, for the amusement of the spectators, to whose occasional and often capricious hissings and peltings it is a part of his profession to submit with a smile and a bow ?

It has been objected that the quality of his prose is marred by his frenzies, and there has even been a cheap edition of the *Rural Rides* with the political allusions and the invective left out. Nothing, no experiment, could show more clearly the impossibility of dealing with Cobbett in any such manner. He must be taken all in all, or not at all. He is a man with a co-ordinated philosophy, and one solid, immovable habit of thought. You cannot divide him into two or three or half-a-dozen Cobbetts. If you do this, you lose his flavour. It is the extraordinary contrasts in his writing that best light up his mind for us, and anyone who understands what Cobbett was fighting for will understand how he can pass at one gust of breath from a description of a sunlit field or a windy hill to a condemnation of politicians. Everything fits into its place, the parts lock together, and the result is one consistent Cobbett. He cannot see a bit of good land without thinking of a starving ploughman. And that leads him in a flash to the "Bawling Snorter, Pitt," or the "Pink-nosed Liverpool," or some other of the public men whom he caricatured and exasperated.

There are few biographies of William Cobbett, probably because he himself left all the material lying about in his books. Robert Huish published his unfriendly *Memoirs of Cobbett* in 1836, soon after Cobbett's death. The book is distinguished chiefly for a painstaking collection of hostile criticisms from various books and newspapers of the time. There is Watson's, published in 1870, Smith's in 1878, Carlyle's in 1904, and there is Mr. Cole's thorough survey, published in 1924. In addition to these, many interesting private letters are to be found in Mr. Lewis Melville's two volumes of the *Life and Letters*, published in 1913.

The first thing that any biographer of Cobbett has to say of his subject is a most important thing. He was born on March 9th, 1763, the son of a farmer and inn-keeper, the landlord of the "Jolly Farmer" at Farnham. His grandfather worked forty years for one farmer. From his earliest boyhood William Cobbett was accustomed to the life of the fields, and at the age of eleven he was in the employ of the Bishop of Winchester, as gardener's boy. The head-gardener told him that Kew was a place to be seen, and with characteristic impulsiveness, he set off to see it. And at Richmond he bought Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, and read it on a haystack. Too much has been made of this incident—although it is true that Cobbett himself later described it as the birth of his intellect. Swift was a far more skilful writer than Cobbett, and what they had in common was a certain tendency to obscenity and savage irony.

He returned from Kew to the old life at Farnham, but could never settle down. He was by nature inquisitive. He wanted to see the world and to know it, and when he beheld, for the first time, the sea, he decided that here was the calling for him. He stayed motionless on Portsdown Hill, and saw the Grand Fleet at Spithead. But they refused him, and he found himself once more behind the plough, though more restless than ever. The next escape was to be more final. While on the way to a fair he saw the London coach coming down the road, boarded it and found himself at Ludgate Hill with half-a-crown. A gentleman befriended him, and he spent the least happy months of his life in an attorney's office in Gray's Inn. At twenty-one he joined the army, and the interesting part of his life began. At Chatham and in New Brunswick the man who was to be a period of history in himself began to find his feet. He left the army after seven years, but there was to the end of his life something of the sergeant-major about him. During these seven formative years many important things happened to him. He discovered his hatred of corruption. He educated himself. He learnt the value of physical fitness. And he met the girl whom, in 1792, he married. Ann Reid was thirteen when he first saw her, and with unconscious priggishness he says that he noticed the sobriety of her conduct at that early age, and realized that he and she were destined for each other. They married when he returned to England, and not the least interesting contrast in his life that was all contrasts is the peace and satisfying happiness of his married life. This man who in public affairs was like a fire-brand, and whose soul was tormented perpetually by humbug and corruption and treachery, enjoyed a home-life that must have done a great deal towards preserving his magnificent constitution. They were happy days at Botley, when he was becoming a radical.

There was a short period in France, and then Cobbett went to America, and his public life started. Here he learned political journalism, and came home to England a full man, thirty-seven years of age. And now began the change in him from Tory principles to radicalism, by easy stages. The stages can be seen in his *Register*, which he started in 1802. The *Register* is Cobbett. It is shot through with his personality, and in its pages can be traced the slow change from an organ in favour of the established order of Church and State, and anti-French, through a dawning opposition to Addington's foreign policy, particularly on the Irish question, and to his finance policy; and so towards a complete radicalism, until in 1816, the price is reduced from sixpence to twopence. From that moment Cobbett wrote for the working classes.

When Cobbett went to Botley in 1805 he was forty-two years of age, and it must be remembered that his manhood had been passed almost entirely abroad or in London. He had made himself into a first-rate political journalist, and he had taught himself to write good English, but he had not found himself. In the *Advice to Young Men* (which, though crammed with commonsense, is remarkable also for startling extrusions of the odd

Puritanical strain in him)—in this book of his there are invaluable accounts of what happened at Botley.

Here, for the first time since he had reached the prime of his years, he had opportunity and leisure to observe the English countryside during the change from agriculture to industry. Here in the south he saw the plight of the farmers, and the plague of land-speculation that must surely rot away the nation's heart. He saw derelict barns and outhouses left to tumble in for lack of money to repair them. He saw ill-clad children, and disheartened labourers starving in a land of plenty. He ground his teeth and vowed himself as a champion of the cause that he could not believe was lost, since it was the cause of the whole of England, could the country be brought to see it. From these days to the end of his life a deeper note came into his anger. He talked and wrote less at random, and even when his rage flew at its wildest, there was reason in what he said, and calculation in his complaints. From these days until his death he used his superb energy to one end. In his hatreds and his loves he was single-hearted.

But the Botley days were not all passed peacefully. At this period he began to take an active part in elections, and to raise his voice more and more against the intolerable dishonesty and cynical apathy of the Commons. He met Burdett, too, and attended his dinners. And then came, in 1809, the mutiny of the militiamen at Ely, and the suppression by German troops, followed by flogging. The comments which he made on the incident decided the Government to prosecute him, and, unfortunately, he conducted his own defence. He knew nothing of the tricks of the courts of law, and a friend of his who was present says that Cobbett was ludicrous during the trial. They put him in prison, and from his cell he continued to write and to manage his farm at Botley.

In 1812, two years later, he was released and began again to agitate for Parliamentary reform, but money troubles forced him to fly to America. He was away three years, but returned to fresh anxieties and conflicts. His home-life was broken up, and his family scattered. He recounts how, in 1821, they all came together in lodgings, and how

Our delight, our mutual caresses, and our tears of joy suffered no abatement at our actually finding ourselves with only three shillings in the whole world ; and at my having to borrow from a friend the money to pay for the paper, and print off the then next Saturday's *Register*.

He tried to get into Parliament in 1820, but failed. The cost of the campaign ruined him, he became bankrupt, and the farm at Botley was sold to pay his creditors.

Cobbett now, in 1820, was fifty-seven, but all his best work lay before him. The books by which he is remembered were to be written in the next ten years. When the horizon was darkest, he was about to enter into his full strength, and to leave words that will not perish. It was not that he stopped fighting. He never for a moment forgot the cause he was championing, but there entered into his style something of solemnity,

something built to endure. The rhetoric loses its irresponsibility. The vituperation, though no less frequent, is less frantic. When we look back at him at this time, his figure increases in stature, and he is seen to be of heroic proportions ; an isolated giant, whose eyes are the eyes of a seer. But the vision that he sees is no poet's vision, no cleaving of the skies asunder. For his face is not upturned in ecstasy to the heavens, but bent in yearning to the good brown earth.

To this period belong the *Twelve Sermons*, *Cottage Economy*, the *History of the Protestant Reformation*, the *Advice to Young Men*, and, of course, the most famous of all his books, *Rural Rides*.

The first surprise that awaits the reader of the *Sermons* is the lowered tone of voice in which they are delivered. They miss no chance of bludgeoning the existing order, and they contain passages in the Puritan manner, but the impression made by them as a whole is one of a man who has set out to explain his first principles as patiently as possible. When rage or bitterness or abuse break in, they are not allowed to carry the author away too far. In these *Sermons*, also, will be found a foreshadowing of the hatred of the clergy and the tithe-system, which led him on to a consideration of the effects of the Reformation.

Cottage Economy is one of the most delightful manuals ever written. It is a practical guide for a labourer in the management of his household, and contains all the fruits of Cobbett's long and wide experience. It is written in the most straightforward style, and is the very best proof that now his rhetoric was not empty stuff. Mr. G. K. Chesterton has said, in his introduction to a recent edition of the book, that though Ruskin could have told one all about the minute veins in a cabbage leaf, yet one would have hesitated to entrust him with the task of cooking the cabbage. Cobbett cooks the cabbage and tells you its cost.

As usual there are the customary digressions, but they are, as usual, welcome. And there is the attack on tea, which, in another place, he called "slopkettle."

The History of the Protestant Reformation, which appeared in monthly parts when Catholic Emancipation was already in the air, had an immense success. But it was far from being intended as religious propaganda. Cobbett said, with some simplicity, in his youth, that the Church of England was good enough for him, since it bore his country's name, and he pointed out in the *Register* that his *History* was not religious propaganda. It was, in fact, another chance for Cobbett to attack the existing order, by pointing out how much happier England had been before the riches passed into the hands of the new families. And he used the chance to the full, and, incidentally, presented for the first time to the general public, the Catholic case. To him Catholic England was a country of happy peasants, and that was what mattered, but in forcing this point home, he revealed other things.

Cobbett himself, writing of his history, said it was very largely founded on the painstaking work of Dr. Lingard, and in this connexion he uttered

one of his characteristically insolent boasts. Referring to Dr. Lingard, he spoke of his "laborious work," which,

able and good as I think it (as far as I have read) will never, until the last page shall have been destroyed by the hand of time, produce a thousandth part of the effect that mine will produce in the space of three years.

Cobbett's *History* produced an instantaneous effect here and abroad ; an effect of a more startling and immediate kind than the less sensational but infinitely more learned work of Lingard. But Lingard's influence spread slowly but surely, and he showed the possibilities of documented history in capable hands.

The *Advice to Young Men* followed, and from it we draw a great deal of all that is known of Cobbett's life in the army and in his own home, among his family. The sustained level of the writing can best be appreciated by one who encounters the difficulty of trying to select a sentence or two to quote. To get the flavour one must quote whole passages, some of great length. But here is an extract which shows how strong his feelings are on the subject of the books children should not be given :

And, first of all, whether as to boys or girls, I deprecate romances of every description. It is impossible that they can do any good, and they may do a great deal of harm. They excite passions that ought to lie dormant ; they give the mind a taste for highly-seasoned matter ; they make matters of real life insipid. Every girl, addicted to them, sighs to be a Sophia Western, and every boy, a Tom Jones.

It is uncompromisingly stern, but it shows an interesting side of the man who wanted everybody to have his fill of beef and beer, and who wrote, as often as not, like a soldier talking at the top of his voice in a canteen.

During this period Cobbett was going about England, collecting the material for his most famous book, the *Rural Rides*. In this book remains for ever the best of Cobbett ; his noble anger, his love of the quiet fields, his economy of words, his lucidity and the hearty prejudices that rode him until the day of his death. *Rural Rides* has given to us once and for all the English countryside during the period of transition. It has been said, and falsely, that Cobbett, being concerned with the things of the moment, was ephemeral. He was not ephemeral. His picture of the England of his time is history, and we who live to-day may see how the change which he deplored has proceeded, when we read, for instance, his angry words about the new buildings between Croydon and London :

In quitting the great town we go through Surrey more than half the way to Lewes. From Saint George's Fields, which now are covered with houses, we go, towards Croydon, between rows of houses, nearly half the way, and the whole way is nine miles. There are erected within these four years, two entire miles of stockjobbers' houses on this one road, and the work goes on with accelerated force ! To be sure ; for the taxes being, in fact, tripled by Peel's Bill, the landlords increase in riches ; and their accommodations increase of course. What an at once horrible and ridiculous thing this country would become, if this thing could go on

only for a few years ! And these rows of new houses, added to the Wen are proof of growing prosperity, are they ? These make part of the increased capital of the country, do they ? But how's this Wen to be dispersed ? I know not whether it be to be done by knife or by caustic ; but dispersed it must be !

Rural Rides is written with the vigour and intolerance of a young man. Cobbett cannot look at a field without seeing the wretched condition of the people who should be drawing a living from it. He cannot see a farmhouse or a barn without experiencing, like a personal injustice, the misery of the labourer.

There are, all over England to-day, landmarks which commemorate his rides. There is the shop of Baxter, in Lewes, where he was shown a farmer's account-book, and there is the " Drummond Arms " at Albury, which perpetuates the name of Mr. Drummond, over whose farm Cobbett rode during one of his journeys. There are whole landscapes which have changed little since he saw them from his horse, and there are others which he saw in process of changing. The style is the easy, active style of a horseman or a walker, and the digressions have the strength and often the fury of a man in full health after a day in the open air. His passion for arithmetic is gratified every time he pauses to do a sum, while looking at a field of barley. And there is a famous passage in which he teaches his son the elements of Arithmetic, and tells us his views on education.

It has been said that Cobbett was against education. This is not true. He distrusted those who talked overmuch of it, because he thought that education, as they understood it, was merely a means towards the further betrayal of the masses. That is why, when somebody was pressing the idea of education, he asked whether it was necessary for an astronomer to know how to mow a meadow. He was the opposite of everything that to-day is called highbrow.

Here is a typical passage from the *Rural Rides*, showing what was going on in his mind at the time :

When we came into the village of Rogate, I saw a little group of persons standing before a blacksmith's shop. The churchyard was on the other side of the road, surrounded by a low wall. The earth of the churchyard was about four feet and a half higher than the common level of the ground round about it ; and you may see, by the nearness of the church windows to the ground, that this bed of earth has been made by the innumerable burials that have taken place in it. The group, consisting of the blacksmith, the wheelwright, perhaps, and three or four others, appeared to me to be in a deliberative mood. So I said, looking significantly at the churchyard, " It has taken a pretty many thousands of your forefathers to raise that ground up so high." " Yes, Sir," said one of them. " And," said I, " for about nine hundred years those who built that church thought about religion very differently from what we do." " Yes," said another. " And," said I, " Do you think that all those who made that heap there are gone to the devil ? " I got no answer to this. " At any rate," added I, " They never worked for a pound and a half of bread a day." They looked hard at me, and then looked hard at one another ; and I, having trotted off, looked round at the first turning, and saw them looking after us still. I should suppose that the church was built about seven or eight

hundred years ago, that is to say, the present church ; for the first church built upon this spot was, I dare say, erected more than a thousand years ago. If I had had time, I should have told this group that, before the Protestant Reformation, the labourers of Rogate received fourpence a day from Michaelmas to Lady-day ; fivepence a day from Lady-day to Michaelmas, except in harvest and grass-mowing time, when able labourers had sevenpence a day ; and that, at this time, bacon was not so much as a halfpenny a pound : and moreover, that the parson of the parish maintained out of the tithes all those persons in the parish that were reduced to indigence by means of old age or other cause of inability to labour. I should have told them this, and, in all probability, a great deal more, but I had not time ; and besides, they will have an opportunity of reading all about it in my little book called the *History of the Protestant Reformation*.

Scattered up and down the *Rides* is many a passage which gives us the quintessence of Cobbett's philosophy. Here is one :

The greater part of manufacture consists of clothing and bedding. Now, if by using a machine, we can get our cost with less labour than we got it before, the machine is a desirable thing. But, then again, we must have the machine at home, and we ourselves must have the profit of it ; and if, in consequence of the existence of the machine, we have hands at home who have nothing to do, and whom we must keep, then the machine is an injury to us, however advantageous it may be to those who use it, and whatever traffic it may occasion with foreign states.

There is a characteristic tirade against Oxford, which is all the more amusing when one remembers that Talleyrand, who wished to buy Cobbett's pen, and thought to flatter him, asked him whether it was at Oxford or at Cambridge that he had been educated !

To any man reading these *Rural Rides* one thing is striking. It is like accompanying the writer on the tour. It is as though one were riding by his side, and finding him the best of companions. As we go along, he points out distant landmarks, puts each piece of soil into its category and intersperses his comments with scraps of autobiography and history. And he cannot keep his own opinions out of his talk. Even when he is admiring a meadow or the curves of a river he is thundering against the politicians. Of all his books this is the best-known, and the one which gives a reader the best idea of the man. It is full of his intolerance, his energy, his love of landscape, his grasp of practical detail, his loathing of humbug. And it has given to us, as I have said, a fixed picture of England as it was in the days of the beginning of Industrialism .

Besides these major works Cobbett published a number of treatises during this period, written, often, at inns by the way. But in 1830 George IV died, and Cobbett started his *Twopenny Trash*, which was the name that William Gifford had applied to the *Political Register* when it came down from sixpence to twopence. It was at this time that he defended the rick-burners, and pointed out that until the present abuses were remedied it was no good blaming the working-people for their outbreaks of violence.

In January, 1833, Cobbett realized the ambition of years, and took his seat in the House of Commons. One of his first acts was what one might

have expected of him. He measured the bench-space, and came to the conclusion that there was too little room.

Those who have left memoirs of the times show us Cobbett as chiefly remarkable for his appearance and for the reputation which preceded him. He was over seventy when he took his seat, and to the people he was almost a legend. He did not speak as well as he wrote. He had not the same self-confidence; which is curious. His literary style is remarkable for its colloquial quality. It is like a man arguing a point. Yet the moment he spoke, his arrogance, his dogmatism deserted him. But his maiden speech was surely not the least interesting of such efforts. It opened with these words :

It appears to me that since I have been sitting here, I have heard a great deal of vain and unprofitable conversation.

He got into Parliament too late, having spent his strength in years of conflict, and his health was already impaired. On March 10th, 1835, he supported a motion for the Repeal of the Malt Tax, but his voice was noticeably weak. In May he was still in his seat, but, realizing that the exertion of public business was too much for him, he went down to Normandy, his Surrey farm, to rest. On June 11th, he became better, but that night, worse still, and though completely master of himself, was obviously growing weaker. On June 18th he died peacefully at the age of seventy-three, only a mile or two from the house where he was born.

" I suppose," he said in old age, " that no one ever has passed a happier life than I have done." He was a simple man, and though his public life was spent, as it were, under arms, he never came home for repose without finding it. He would return, like Danton, to his mother earth, when the strain of what he had undertaken became too great.

He remains for us in his writings ; and, if it is permitted to indulge a fancy, the wanderer in English lanes may meet him by moonlight, riding his horse strongly, his body erect. And as he passes into the mist there gather round him the shades of poor unhappy men, for whom he spoke when they could not speak for themselves.

CORRESPONDENCE

MEDIÆVAL HISTORY

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—May I add a footnote to the sentence in your obituary notice of Cardinal Gasquet about Dr. G. G. Coulton's *Monastic Legend*, 1905, as one whose studies often take him into mediæval fields? The succession of Dr. Coulton's books since this date are of such importance that nobody interested in mediæval history or art can afford to miss them—*Chaucer and His England*, *From St. Francis to Dante*, *Art and the Reformation*, *Five Centuries of Religion* (now in progress), and, among other publications, the separate pamphlets called *Mediæval Studies*. England has hitherto been behind the continent of Europe in the work of sifting out and publishing documentary evidence; but now a vast mass of material has been got together, and we are within sight, perhaps, of an agreed judgment among scholars about a period which has been much misunderstood in the past.—Yours, etc.,

A UNIVERSITY LECTURER.

THE STATE OF THE THEATRE

To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY

SIR,—You tell us that all the plays of the 'nineties have perished in a generation except one by Oscar Wilde and one or two by Mr. Shaw. But it is fair to ask what decade in the last two hundred years in the history of the British drama has done as well as this. Within that period the eighteen-nineties are surpassed, I think, only by the seventeen-seventies, which saw the production of *She Stoops to Conquer* and of the three best of Sheridan's plays. If this is so, should not the 'nineties be extolled for producing more plays worthy to survive than so many preceding decades rather than blamed for not producing more still?

—Yours, etc.,

G. CROSSE.

LAST ESSAYS

To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY

SIR,—There is a curious mistake in C. E. Montague's *Last Essays*—No. 5—in your March number—"‘Visited all night by troops of stars’ in Wordsworth's poem on *Mont Blanc*." It is from Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise*, and I cannot bear that Wordsworth should be credited with this beautiful line—he has so many to his credit!—Yours, etc.,

ETHEL BOYCE.



TREADING GRAPES
Woodcut by CLARE LEIGHTON

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

SOME NOTES ON FRENCH BOOKS OF HOURS OF THE LATE FIFTEENTH AND EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURIES, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

The Book of Hours was not, in an exact sense, a liturgical work of the Church of Rome, but a compilation intended for the private devotions of laymen. Hence its contents, although for the most part extracted from liturgies, principally the Breviary, varied somewhat. The book was of great antiquity, but attained its highest popularity in France in the fourteenth & fifteenth centuries. Many magnificent examples of richly illuminated manuscript Hours have survived from the libraries of book collectors of those days. Illuminated Hours were a fashion and their possession was a mark, not of devotion, but of an interest in the arts of the book. This is borne out by the fact that in the great majority of cases the text was in Latin, and not the vernacular. Towards the end of the century the printers of Paris dared to compete with the calligraphers in the production of this popular book. They could not, of course, equal the best work of the individual artist, but within their limits they had a wonderful success and carried the art of book illustration to a height

THE AGE OF THE ESTIENNES

IN a former number of *THE LONDON MERCURY* I ventured to suggest that if a modern printer wished to model his own work on that of any one of the great periods of early printing he should choose for his study and imitation the French printers of the sixteenth century. Such bookmen and printers as Geofroy Tory, Claude Garamont, Simon de Colines and the Estiennes had freed the craft from the leading-strings of its cradle age. It had come into its full inheritance, had assumed excellences of its own, and had ceased to rely for its beauty on the traditions of the craft from which it had sprung. Its new freedom is seen in the character of the types which give such lightness and serenity to the books of the period. In their title-pages and headings, majuscules and minuscules alike are magnified to a size which shows a conscious exhibition of their individual beauty. Moreover, the art of printing had

mated happily with that of the woodcut ; and the union bore fruit in the devices, head-pieces, borders and decorated initial letters of Tory and in the picture-books of Bernard Salamon.

Mr. George Jones shows how well he has studied the printing of that age in a handsome folio printed from a " first setting " of the new " Estienne " letter which he has designed for use with the linotype composing machine. The character is quite worthy of being christened with so great a name. Anyone who compares the specimen which by the kindness of Mr. Jones I am able to show here with the pages from Simon de Colines and Robert Estienne reproduced in Mr. Morison's *Four Centuries of Fine Printing* will see how closely the new type keep to its model. Mr. Jones associates the type with Garamont, although there is no direct evidence that he designed it. Robert Estienne's type is discussed in the masterly article which Paul Beaujon wrote for the fifth number of *The Fleuron* :

The Estienne face [he writes] was designed by a master with a real knowledge of the mechanics of type-cutting. . . . Characteristic letters are : the e, in which the high cross-stroke is horizontal (as a matter of fact it even tilts *down and forward* imperceptibly so as to give the eye the effect of a true horizontal, a clever adjustment which has never been copied), the a, with a shallow angular bowl, the g with a top circle only half the height of the lower-case m, allowing for a graceful curve towards the tail, the sharp delicate top-serifs as in the h, the condensation of the r and the h.

Most of these features are found also in Mr. Jones's new fount. It retains the long ascenders and descenders which give an air of such lightness and grace to Estienne's pages. The beautiful upper case letters are as tall as the ascenders of the lower case, as they are in Estienne's type in its larger sizes, but not in the smaller. R, however, has lost something of its characteristic kick : perhaps the Linotype people will cut an alternative form in keeping with the sounder tradition. The new type is to be cast later in 16-, 14- and 12-point sizes. As shown in the 18-point size in Mr. Jones's folio, it will inspire many a fine book. I should like it better set close and solid, just as Robert Estienne used its ancestor.

THE PRIORY AND THE HIGH HOUSE PRESSES

WHILE it is pleasant to chronicle the founding of new private presses, it is even more pleasant to note the continued activity of some of those to whose earliest efforts I drew attention in these pages. Mr. Robert King, who some years since printed at his Priory Press at Tynemouth a little book of poems on the lives of the pitmen and, in 1924, a collection of *Old Tyneside Street Cries* with their musical setting, maintains the local interest of his issues in *The North Shields Lighthouses*, extracted from the books of the Trinity House, Newcastle, and illustrated with line drawings by Mr. Victor N. Rainbird. I have referred more than once to the series of interesting reprints so pleasantly produced with a very modest equipment at the High House Press, Shaftesbury, some of which will be exhibited amongst the Fifty Selected Books which are to be shown before long at the First Edition Club. The printing of poetry belongs with a special appropriateness to little presses such as these. Mr. King sends me *Spring's Garden : Flower Verses for Children*, by Florence B. Hyatt, and *Alps of Gold : Poems* by Gwen Grant, some of which first appeared in *Punch* and other periodicals. A sadder and more solemn note is sounded in *The Reckoning*, a collection of poems by E. M. Martin, printed by Mr. Masters at the High House Press.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

A LETTER FROM SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH, May, 1929.

TO those who contend that the vitality of Scottish literary activity is inextricably bound up with the success of Scottish Nationalism politically, the past year must appear particularly disappointing. The unexpectedly large vote obtained by Mr. Cunninghame-Graham in the Glasgow Rectorial Election and the rising importance of the Nationalist party have not been accompanied by any corresponding increase in the production of really significant work in the sphere of art and letters. Men of letters have played a most prominent part in the political movement, however, backed by the silent support of a much wider group of intellectuals in academic and professional circles than is sometimes realised. Perhaps the struggle may yet stimulate a surprising crop of imaginative work, when the smoke of battle rolls away.

In the field of prose little writing of outstanding importance has appeared other than the excellent short stories of Mr. Neil Gunn, an Inverness exciseman, who seems happier with this form than when he essays the novel. While Mr. William Jeffrey is giving us delightful essays in the *Herald* at the week-ends, no criticism is being written in Scotland to equal the best work of Mr. Edwin Muir.

Miss Christine Orr's last novel, *Hogmanay* (Hodder and Stoughton, London. 7s. 6d.), is shrewd and readable but well below the standard she set herself when she wrote *Kate Curlew*. The picture of Edinburgh is cleverly drawn and her humbler characters are painted with a touch of genius. The description of Edinburgh society given by Mr. G. M. Thomson is his *The Rediscovery of Scotland* (Kegan Paul. 7s. 6d.) is much more unkind, but much more amusing. However, it is time Mr. Thomson stopped being the Guedalla of the North and concentrated on rivalling Mr. Lytton Strachey as a master of the short biographical sketch; the latter part of this last book showed him to be almost as good as Mr. Donald Carswell at this type of writing.

In the sphere of poetry, the Porpoise Press has continued to issue not only a series of broadsheets but larger volumes of verse. The same meticulous care and taste continues to be displayed in matters of form and print, and the proprietors still keep a watchful eye for new entrants to the ranks, without lowering their standard of quality and interest. Their most significant find for many months has been Mr. J. C. Grant whose book, *The Rook Shoot* (3s. 6d.) will not perhaps prove a popular success. Most of the verse in this volume concerns the country and farm life, and deals with it with the strength and realism of Hardy and the intimacy of Mr. Blunden. The force and vivid imagination of some of these lyrics leads us to expect much in the future from this new name in Scottish letters. We have been hearing less of the vernacular revival. Mr. William Ogilvie and Miss Marion Angus continue to give us authentic Scots verse, and the Porpoise Press found in the author of the *Lan'art Loon* a new poet who can wield Scots with force and colour. Mr. Albert Mackie showed in one or two of the poems published in a University "paumflet" that he was a vernacularist of consequence, but unfortunately he has now left us for Jamaica.

Few things are more disappointing in modern Scotland than the absence of a distinctively Scottish school of artists or composers. In both spheres we have accomplished craftsmen of the older generation and young experimenters, but the latter seem to be seeking inspiration very largely in work and ideas alien to their home country and not readily transplantable, while the former stick to beaten tracks and show more discretion than valour in their output.

It is in the sphere of drama that most activity and development seem to have taken

place. The Community Drama Festival has received a considerable "fillip" through the sensational success of the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Players (on whom I had the honour of adjudicating in their preliminary round) in England and America. There was a greatly increased entry this year from all parts of the country. It is to be hoped that the stimulus to amateur acting given by this organisation, by the Carnegie Trust grants, and by the pioneer efforts of the Arts League of Service Travelling Theatre may induce a greater number of the younger Scottish writers to essay the dramatic form. Another significant development has been the rise to prominence of a small company known as the Bowhill Players, the bulk of whom are miners by calling, who have been presenting plays by Joe Corrie up and down the country. The unaffected sincerity and strength of their acting have struck many people and earned them a wide reputation.

During the year the Scottish National Theatre Society has become a limited company and its new manifesto of policy and aims has attracted attention, provoking no little controversy. First of all, at the end of last year Mr. St. John Ervine in the *Observer*, commenting on an article of mine, objected to the suggestion that possibly in the future Scots dramatists would find inspiration in modern industrialism and in the reactions of Presbyterian Scotsmen to Irish immigration. "I hope," he said, "that re-organisation does not mean a change from ancient to modern misery. I can see no advantage in exchanging Hebridean gloom for Cowcaddens gloom. May we not hope for a little artistry and fun?" "Artistry and fun!" That is exactly what the present producer of the Players has been trying hard to import into their play bills—some amusing decoration, some light-hearted humour. He tried it in the form of mimed Scots folk song, and what a storm in a tea-cup he raised! It must be generally agreed that there has been in Scotland little exploration of the decorative and stylized branch of theatrical art, and too much concentration on peasant plays or romantic historical sketches. I quote from the article to which Mr. Ervine replies:

Folks grew tired of the croft-kitchen scene and the keening of Highland mothers at the deaths of their unlawful children. The movement's followers began to divide into well-defined groups and to split hairs with one another. Barrie plays were taboo, but Lowland or Highland trivialities treated by lesser men in the same vein were tried in vain. One type of historical play pleased the patriots; another shocked the patriots and pleased the discerning critics. Shavian dialogue showing the revolt of the modern in a Scots Sabbatarian home had a sermon preached against it in Glasgow's Kirk and filled the theatre night after night, but this was held to be getting away from the traditions of the movement.

The trouble seems to be that those who watched at the cradle of the infant Scottish National Theatre are not going to allow this particular form of artistry and fun to be experimented with, even as a side line. It is certainly disappointing that nothing more strikingly original is forthcoming in the way of dramatic fare; so much of what is offered lacks "theatre" and smacks of Barrie. Both Mr. George Malcolm Thomson and Mr. Murray McClymont have strongly voiced the need for a Repertory Theatre in Scotland recently. There can be no doubt that the present position of Scottish drama to-day cannot be attributed to the audiences or to the actors. There lie ready to hand an admirable instrument and a strong body of support, as will be apparent the moment the really first-rank play come along.

By the way, the President of Magdalen, in his presidential speech to the Scott Club in Edinburgh, lamented the demise of that admirable journal, *The Scottish Historical Review*, and made the most practical suggestion that it might be revived as a fitting memorial at the Scott Centenary.

DAVID CLEGHORN THOMSON



THE VILLAGE SCANDAL

By ISA CAMERON

CHRONICLES

THE DRAMA

RASPUTIN. By A. TOLSTOI and P. E. SHCHEGOLEFF. The Stage Society.

COOEE. A REVUE. Vaudeville Theatre.

PARIS BOUND. By PHILIP BARR. Lyric Theatre.

FUNNY FACE. A REVUE. Winter Garden.

THE DIVORCE OF MRS. GAREY. By GILBERT WAKEFIELD. Royal Court Theatre.

THE MATRIARCH. By G. B. STERN. Royalty Theatre.

MAJOR BARBARA. By G. B. SHAW. Wyndham's Theatre.

RASPUTIN has already become a legendary figure. He belonged to a period of history that is also becoming legendary, a period that is being blotted out by the fatal poppies of oblivion. The last three years of Imperial Russia have been chronicled by a few ambassadors at the Court of Petrograd and by an occasional military attaché. But there are no real records, no documents, no authoritative accounts of the currents and undercurrents on which Romanoff Russia swept helplessly to its final ruin. It is a period without an historian. It is a blank page in Europe's story. The vague stories of the Imperial circle, the influence of this and that general, the corruption of this and that army-contractor, the part played by Sukhomlinoff, and, above all the part played by Rasputin, the boggy-monk (or, alternatively, the demon-monk), have all passed into the mists of legend. Propaganda, of course, has been hard at work, proving and disproving things with the certainty and infallibility of all propaganda, and now it is becoming almost impossible to distinguish any clear outlines among the cloudy mass of evidence. What was the secret of Rasputin's power? Was it some hypnotic influence over women? Was it the Tsarina's belief, whether founded or unfounded, that the monk could really cure, or at any rate alleviate, the sufferings of the unfortunate Tsarevich? Or was Rasputin, as this play suggested over and over again, genuinely inspired with a divine mission to stop the massacre on the Eastern front and bring peace to Russia? Whatever was the reason, the man was apparently possessed of gigantic strength of body and will, and his influence was immense.

In this play, the monk is drawn as a bestial monster with a divine mission. His passionate desire for wine and women is matched by his passionate desire for Peace. His intrigues against the Army, against the War and against the War-party in Petrograd and Mohilev are represented as means to his end. "Russia is ruined if the war goes on," was his cry, "Russia must make peace at any cost, at any cost." The Grand Duke Dmitri and Felix Youssopoff killed him. The war continued. Peace was not made. And Russia was ruined. It is difficult to say that Rasputin, if these were really his aims and these were really his words, was wrong. The result of Romanoff war-making was Romanoff ruin.

Rasputin was much too long and the action dragged at times rather laboriously. But a lot of it was interesting and some of it, particularly the murder itself, was dramatic. Mr. Robert Atkins was magnificent as the boggy-monk. He ought to act a

great deal more than he does. There was one slightly improbable note in the production which kept on recurring and kept on jarring. Rasputin apparently was a great hand at telephoning. He was perpetually at it, and never once did he fail to get the number and the person he wanted in under two seconds. It became quite uncanny. The Moscow telephone-service must have been just about the most accurate and the fastest in the world.

The Tents of Israel is a dramatised version of a novel of the same name, and it provides a stage for Mrs. Patrick Campbell to return to London. For that, at least, playgoers ought to be grateful. The play opens with a prologue which explains that in 1902 the first grandson of the Matriarch, Anastasia Rakonitz, was born. As a matter of fact he is not a Rakonitz grandson at all, but the illegitimate son of a Rakonitz daughter and a father who has hastily decamped.

In the first act, nineteen years later, the grandson is in the bosom of the Rakonitz family and, like them, is dominated, bullied, wheedled and generally under the thumb of the Matriarch. He is, however, unlike them, thoroughly fed up with the family-life, bored with the famous Jewish traditions, unmoved by the famous Jewish pride. His only interest lies in the attractive person of his first cousin, Toni Rakonitz, and she heartily reciprocates the interest. But unfortunately, Toni feels, owing presumably to a lofty attachment to the principles of eugenics, that she ought not to marry a first cousin. At this juncture the fortunes of the family fail, one of the Matriarch's brothers dies of shock at the news, and the act closes. So far, so good. All werry capital, as Mr. Bernard Darwin would say. But unfortunately from this point the play consistently declines. The Matriarch puts a brave face on it and retires to Ealing, Toni puts a brave face on it and retires to Chelsea where she lives with a girl-friend, a poster-artist. Danny, the grandson, is mooning round. Then who should drop into the Chelsea studio but Danny's long-lost father? He is on his way from one end of the world to the other and has just looked in to buy a poster. The motive for this headstrong act remained obscure. Over a few cocktails father and son discover each other and the son, in particular, discovers to his intense joy that his existence in the world has not received the blessing of the Church. He is no longer Toni's first cousin and eugenics can go hang. The father gives him a cheque for £200 and invites him to come round to his hotel for what is nowadays called "the binder." Danny breaks the good news about the cheque and the illegitimacy to Toni who at once fastens on the money to pay a long-standing family debt. With a loud and highly justifiable roar of "The family again," Danny bounces out of the studio, never to return. Toni decides to leave Chelsea and return to the Matriarch at Ealing, and thus the play slowly fizzled out.

The promise of the prologue and the first act was sadly unfulfilled, but at least in those two scenes Mrs. Campbell had a chance. Her acting illuminates the whole stage and lifts everyone with her on to a different level. Her movements and her mastery of the tiny details of acting are superb. There was one amazing moment when she advanced slowly to the sofa on which her brother Max was lying dead and held the audience spell-bound simply with the way she moved. But after the end of Act One, not even Mrs. Patrick Campbell's greatness could overcome the fearful odds presented by the author. There was one passage, for example, which, had it been differently written, might have given scope for Mrs. Campbell's genius to blossom for a moment or two. As it was, it contained this gem of wit, this positively Whistlerian flash, this miracle of audacity:

The proof of the pudding is on the knees of the Gods.

It came as a surprise after this that Mrs. Campbell was not called upon to perform

a step-dance to her own saxophone accompaniment. The truth is that Mrs. Patrick Campbell is miles too big for her part. Miss Beatrix Thomson has a charming personality but not the sort of personality for the part of Toni Rakonitz. She was utterly mis-cast. Mr. Abraham Sofaer acted well.

Paris Bound is full of sound, but not fury, and signifies nothing. Mr. Malcolm Keen was good as an actor and Mr. Edmund Jones as a scenery-designer. Miss Edna Best is developing an artificial way of talking which is rather annoying.

The Divorce of Mrs. Garey is a play that moves slowly. Middle-aged husband—pretty wife—handsome young man—night in hotel—return at 7 a.m.—evening dress—suspicious—very. This would perhaps have been Mr. Jingle's version of the events of the first act. The second act is the time-honoured and almost always exciting scene in Court. There is the dry but humorous judge, here the array of learned Counsel. There is the comic witness, here the picture of conjugal innocence. And so on. The only flaw was the really appalling incompetence of the defending counsel. The man was a knight and a K.C., and yet he missed the most overwhelmingly convincing point in favour of his client. No wonder things turned out as they did. Towards the end there are one or two surprises, and a surprise is always welcome when it comes suddenly into a stereotyped set of situations, and the play is redeemed into being quite a pleasant entertainment.

Miss Isabel Jeans is a joy to watch and her acting is good. Indeed the acting of the whole company was capital, Mr. Carson, as the husband, and Mr. Jack Hobbs as the young lover being especially so.

Cooe and *Funny Face* are both revues and have this in common, that both are extremely amusing and delightful. People who have not seen Mr. Leslie Henson in the latter ought to rush at once and see him. He is not merely a funny man: he is an artist as well. He can convey his meaning with a flick of an eyelid, he can imitate a human being or an animal with a gesture of arm or leg. There is no effort and no exaggeration. And he is also incredibly funny. Mr. Sydney Howard is also very good. The star turn in *Cooe* is Mr. Billy Bennett, a comedian of a more old-fashioned variety, much more in the line of the great music-hall comedians, Bard, Weldon, Formby and the rest. He is well backed up by Miss Dorothy Dickson and Mr. Claude Hulbert and an excellent company.

The revival of *Major Barbara* was great fun. Mr. Baliol Holloway was blandly Machiavellian as Andrew Undershaft, but Mr. Lewis Casson, though acting sincerely and capably, lacked the wordly benignity and courtliness of the famous original of Professor Adolphus Cusins. Miss Thorndike was quieter than usual, and so acted better.

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

On June 3rd Mr. C. B. Cochran is presenting for an eight-week season the New York Theatre Guild Acting Company in a comedy called *Caprice*, with the original cast and production, and on July 18th an operette by Mr. Noel Coward entitled *Bitter Sweet*. Not content with these two undertakings the indefatigable Mr. Cochran is bringing over the Guitrys in their operette, *Mariette*, which has had a long and successful run in Paris.

Miss Helen Ford, fresh from her triumph in *The Patsy*, is coming back to London on June 3rd in a new play *Coquette*.

From June 12th, for ten days, M. Gaston Baty's French Company will appear at the Arts Theatre in *Maya*.

A. G. MACDONELL

ARCHITECTURE

CONTRASTS IN OLD AND NEW ARCHITECTURE

IT is now recognised that modern Swedish architecture is perhaps better than, and is certainly as good as, that of any other country in the world. The new Town Hall is well-known and admired, it figures on every poster and leaflet that invites the traveller to visit Stockholm. And it is a more completely well-designed and well-finished building than this attractive literature represents it to be. In every detail there is beautiful work: nothing about it is commonplace. Each feature has been thoughtfully shaped and made, and for each a technically able artist has been employed. But this fact though notable, and, I think, in the public buildings of this country unknown, does not give the Swedish town hall the chief quality for which it deserves fame. This quality is derived from a very generous planning. The great State chambers and the approaches to them, the corridors and ante-rooms, would be condemned as outrageously extravagant by any English town- or county-council. Yet the resultant building has drawn to Stockholm the attention of those who like the evidence of prosperity and vigour. The building is really lovely. Whether it is seen from a distance or viewed from within the courtyards, it impresses so great a sense of wonder on the visitor that he feels insignificant before the imaginative balance of a practical commonsense and of a delicately adventurous skill in the arts.

The wonder of some, however, is modified or altogether spoiled by a self-imposed standard of judgment. These are they who, being saturated with a desire for aggressive modernity, regret the absence of visible ferro-concrete or complain because it is possible to find a prototype for each feature in the older examples of European architecture. Because this building rises from a wide stretch of water, or because it stands on a long arcade, they decry it as a copy of the Doges' Palace at Venice. I think these folk purposely misjudge it: the form and plan of the two buildings are definitely different; but even if Mr. Ostberg had the older palace in his mind he has made of this building a new thing, interesting as a complete unit and not at all the combined result of two markedly different times and peoples.

But, just as the Doges' Palace is not the only work of art that makes Venice famous for beauty, so neither is the Stockholm Town Hall the only proof of the Swedish sense of seemly rightness. Were there no new Town Hall with its paintings, sculpture, architecture and fittings, the purposeful fantasies of Mr. Carl Milles and the newer buildings of Mr. Tengbom—The Concert House, the offices of the match industry and the Hogalids kyrkan would be proof of the versatile good sense of this people. In Sweden there does not appear to be a class, as there is in most other nations, which talks and a little practises art and which by these means imposes standards of judgment on an innocent majority. Rather it is the spirit and instinct of the whole people itself from which is derived a full awareness of art. For when the City determined to cut a new street, Kungsgaten, deeply into the rocky heart of the mainland, that street became a roadway, sane, balanced, generous and useful. The houses on either side are not expensively elaborate as they are in the richer cities of Paris and London. The bridges which carry the older streets across the new deep-cut way are stone built arches with pleasant parapets, and the ends of the higher bridge are marked by well placed opposing towers which rise some two hundred feet from the lower roadway. These tall blocks are noble in appearance because of their bulk and height and chiefly because of their relationship to the buildings and streets about them rather than because of their individual forms.

But lately I have been direct from Stockholm to a small township in the Tarn Department of France. There though the spirit of the place only continues to live in its stone walls and finely masoned houses the same deliberate appreciation of balanced well-being still exists.

It is my desire by thus considering together this thirteenth-century town of Cordes and the newer parts of Stockholm to expose the common reality which underlies both places, and to show that the art of fine building in both is not an affectation of a talked-up cult but the natural expression of communities, busy in the successful search for prosperity which allows a margin of "money-leisure" for the creation of beauty. And I would like to show that that beauty is not a thing separate from or added to commercial well-being and established social order, but a complement to these qualities, the expression of them without which they are not complete.

The protective walls of Cordes, and its position on an isolated and steep hill, though they are historically interesting and suggestive of romance, as were the growth of Rome and the attempts at the reconquest of the Holy-land, do not of themselves give this town its real value and meaning. They were as necessary then to the continued existence of this town as are to-day the railway stations and well-metalled approach-roads of other places. The beauty and interest of Cordes lies in the able way in which it was planned and built not merely as a fortified city but as a place safe for the prosperity of the inhabitants and for their enjoyment of fine buildings, fine civic ceremonial and the development of the visible arts. Cordes is situate in the middle belt which crosses southern France from east to west. The Church architecture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in this belt is distinguished by the use of the dome much as it was used in the later Byzantine buildings of the Eastern Church. It was during these centuries that this country enjoyed and suffered from adherence to the Albigensian Heresy. Through these centuries the heads of the Western Church with increasing energy alternately bullied, and preached at, these hereitics in the hope of their conversion. Through these two hundred years they held to their peculiar faith, denied the papal authority, proclaimed the Duality of God and were, while they prevailed, upheld by their feudal lords and even by a number of bishops. Eventually hopeless of their obstinacy, a Pope ordered their extermination. The great owners of the land forsook them, the bishops upheld their sees and vowed obedience, a few lesser lords stood out but in the face of an holy war were driven with the people, by steel and fire, from the towns and villages to find what shelter they could on the dry, stoney and naked hills which in some parts of the district have such bulk and height as to deserve the name of mountains. Those who survived were starving, cold and barely clothed. They formed groups for mutual support and thus searched for food. Their hatred of those who caused them such suffering did not increase their love for the church which had ordered it. Raymond, the Seventh Count of Toulouse, was publicly sympathetic with their disasters and perhaps was secretly tolerant of their beliefs. He, through his influence, gained permission to build a walled town for some of these unfortunate people and in 1222 the "Catholic" town of Cordes was founded. For its site he chose an isolated hill, the top of which formed an elongated tableland of limestone rock. The steep sides of this stony cap exposed in places white perpendicular cliffs to the well-watered valleys beneath and elsewhere rose less abruptly from the lower well-grassed and gentler slopes of the hill's base. The Count and these people saw that if a civilized prosperity was to be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the new town it must be protected against the sudden invasion of the starving peasantry, or perhaps from the too impetuous and too willing supressors of a quickly found or even an imagined heresy. The town was laid out with two parallel streets of widths

which are considerable when compared with those of the older cities of the district, and athwart the hill were made other streets at right angles to these. A covered market-place was built and an open space was set apart for the tethering of oxen and horses. The outside walls of a continuous belt of houses formed the first and innermost protection, but immediately after these were complete, or even while yet they were unfinished, a second ring of defence was added and the embattled wall was built. Between the ring of houses and this wall was a narrow roadway which enabled the inhabitants quickly to reach any point that was in immediate danger. In each defensive circle were built strong gatehouses where the main entrances to the town were set. No windows or only very narrow ones faced outward except from the upper storeys of the houses beyond the reach of ladders. Here may be seen twin windows beneath a single arch, placed for public observation and for domestic use.

Fair squared-stone fronts were given to four-storeyed houses on either hand, and these well built houses stand to this day. Each was built independent of its neighbour, though on the street the narrow space that still divides one from another is walled across. This separation of house from house may have been ordered as a precaution against fire. The houses on the more important streets were built each with a central courtyard. There were giving direct access from the streets three, four or five arched openings raised on low imposts to acutely pointed heads. This ground-floor storey seems to have formed the store- or ware-house of the citizen owner. At one end of each frontage is a lower and narrower archway leading through the front block to a spiral stone stairs off the courtyard. On the first and second floors are a series of large rooms for the most part once provided with hooded and columned fireplaces. But the beauty of the streets, and the pleasure to be had from these rooms, lay in the series of fine arched and shafted twin-windows where a richly moulded and widely cusped rose-shaped eye fills the tympanums above each dividing mullion. And each separate mullion and shafted jamb is itself crowned with a foliated capitol and set on a subtly modelled base. The rooms on the first and second floors each have ranges of such windows, and each window is made comfortable for use by the provision of raised side window-seats of stone, built there as the walls were built. The topmost floors are lighted from square stone openings set low beneath the overhanging tiled eaves of timbered roofs.

Such was a new town of a well-organized people in the thirteenth century when no older streets or houses and no vested interests prevented a sensible and civilized use of the latest knowledge and theory of civic planning. The architectural treatment of any window, of any door, of any fireplace or of a spiral stairs was common throughout western Europe of the time, none was consciously modern, nowhere was there visible attempt to do something new. But newness and modernity was stamped on the town and gave it a life that, like radium, continues even to-day to fire those who come near it with a renewed vigour and keener interest in life, beauty and well-being. So also it is in Stockholm in this the twentieth century ; though there the town has had for three hundred years a clearly defined form from which it cannot, even if it would, depart. In a word my conclusion is that the praised or disputed modernity and value of Swedish civic architecture lies not in the invention of new styles but in the good use of what is current and well-known.

A. R. POWYS

THE FINE ARTS

THE ROYAL ACADEMY. Burlington House.

PAINTINGS BY AUGUSTUS JOHN. Messrs. Tooth & Sons.

PAINTINGS BY WILSON STEER. Tate Gallery.

THE two most interesting pictures in this year's Academy are by Augustus John and Richard Sickert: but that by Sickert, though amusing and delightful in colour, is by no means his best work. The two worst paintings are both by Cadogan Cowper. For this year there are fewer very bad paintings than usual and there is a worst. The general standard is pretty high, the "jazz" room has been abolished and the modern is mingled pleasantly with the old-fashioned: yet there is a grave lack of distinguished work. That is the fact which chiefly impresses and depresses the visitor: how little there is really to admire, how much less than in other smaller exhibitions, how much there is of competent, but indifferent or mere-tricious stuff and how few of the painters, young and old, who genuinely count in English art, are represented! The critic gets a bit wearied of this annual refrain and cuts it shorter each year. But it cannot be omitted altogether. It is the critical motif of the Academy and is to be recognised in all the notices rising louder or fainter according as the critic is tired or has deliberately lowered his standard. For one does tend to lower one's standard and to hail with pleasure paintings of no great substance which would be passed over elsewhere. Such, for instance, are Sir William Orpen's portrait of Sir Ray Lankester, Mr. Atkinson's flower-piece, Mr. Kelley's *Chinese Lady* (which has an all over soapiness), Mr. Connard's *Susannah and the Elders*, quite a charming decorative embroidery, Mr. Harry Bush's *Old Pear Tree in Spring*, Miss Fisher Prout's *Ladbroke Grove*, Mr. George Belcher's still life, Mr. Hesketh Hubbard's *Colour-Splashed Interior*, Mr. A. K. Lawrence's portrait of a young woman on a hill top, Mr. Algernon Newton's *Norfolk Mill*, Mr. Robert Austin's engraving *Woman Praying*, Mr. Paul Drury's etching *September* and Mr. Baylis Allen's water-colour *Entrance to Tilbury Dock*. These and others would form a pleasant background to more important, original and searching work. This, however, is not to be found, except in an incomplete form in Mr. Augustus John's *Portrait of a Man* and Mr. Richard Sickert's *Sir Nigel Playfair as Tony Lumpkin*. Mr. John has held an exhibition of his recent work at Messrs. Tooth's Gallery, and this work has been hailed in some quarters as marking both a revival of a flagging inspiration and an advance on anything hitherto achieved by Mr. John. I could not see that. There was one charming portrait of a girl that is certainly destined to find a place in anthologies of English paintings of women, and one landscape that alone of several seemed to be more than an accomplished exercise. The flower paintings, which are a new departure, lacked real grip and spontaneity. Mr. John's portraits, however, are nearly always interesting and the *Portrait of a Man* in the Academy is more than that: it is nearly good, but it is uneven and wanting in unity and coherence. A mark of this unevenness is the feeling that the head, the foreground and the background, have been painted as separate patches and have never really been seen together. Mr. Sickert's painting increases its value with further acquaintance. When this happens with a picture it is a sign of merit. Some genuine significance has gradually forced its way through. Yet surely it possesses one evident weakness. Like most of the artist's works it is conceived as a composition of luminous colour tones and the

painting is on too large a scale for this kind of description, and for what the artist has to say. The result is that it has large empty uncomposed spaces. Size does matter in a painting. A picture magnified loses in intensity and Mr. Sickert has really conceived a small picture of an essentially impressionist character. The impression hits off vividly a characteristic attitude, and Mr. Sickert displays what in current critical jargon is called a fine economy of means, which is a misleading way of saying that the artist has said nothing beside the point and has been brief. Misleading, because brevity has not necessarily any special value.

In his art Mr. Wilson Steer is somewhat of a chameleon, and the exhibition of his work which has been held at the Tate Gallery (a very high honour for a living artist) has stressed this aspect a little too much. Mr. Steer seems able to combine a fundamentally English temperament and a keen and exclusive love of English scenery and subjects with a taste for pastiche so strong that it is very much more than a mere diversion. Here is a variation on Renoir, there on Monet or Manet, there on Constable or Gainsborough, there again on an eighteenth-century print and nowhere except in a few watercolours and landscapes is there no obvious derivation. Thus one finds oneself asking the silly question, which is the real Steer? It is silly because every artist changes and develops: he must do so unless he is to repeat himself. Nevertheless there is this about the question that in every one of his many different moods the artist must be genuine, and the very fact that one immediately asks the question about Steer's pictures shows that there is an uneasy feeling that the influences which they betray so shamelessly are not so much phases spontaneously passed through in the course of development as styles deliberately assumed. Real influences are expansions of the artist's temperament and are spontaneously and irresistibly submitted to. But here the thing is willed. That is the criticism that is forced upon one in the present exhibition. In the great majority of the oil paintings the approach has been too intellectual and the result is partly a *tour-de-force*. Yet rarely is any painting devoid of considerable charm, and when Gainsborough is mingled with Impressionism then we do seem to get as near as possible to the real Steer and a new value is produced which is both different from the sum of the combined influences and is not merely as in the other paintings, a value partially suppressed by a form which is not congenial. The very fact, however, that Mr. Steer has followed so consistently this method of painting shows that he himself has been uncertain what exactly he did want to paint and the uncertainty has been filled in by artifice. Take, for instance, the painting of the sailing vessels which is so frequently admired. It seems to me that the architectural construction is far too deliberate and has not really been felt, and that the effect is just posterish, although inside this artificial composition there is a genuine sense of light and movement and colour. To a certain extent the answer to the question, where is the real Steer, is that usually he never quite emerges and that he has not quite existed.

PUBLICATIONS

AN INTRODUCTION TO DUTCH ART. By R. K. WILENSKI. Faber & Gwyer. 25s.

MR. WILENSKI applies to Dutch art with a rigidity, more common in Continental than English writers, the principles of criticism which he enunciated in his volume on *The Modern Movement in Art*, and for an explanation of what he means by the special terminology which he uses he refers the reader to that volume. This somewhat aggravating practice diminishes the coherence of his historical sketch

which becomes completely intelligible only in relation to another work. Nevertheless, the present history is, on the whole, admirably put together and very interesting. Yet the chief reason for this interest does not lie in the critical appraisal, at any rate of the big painters, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals. Mr. Wilenski says nothing new about them and what he does say is of the following character: "Many moderns who feel ill at ease with Rembrandt's romantic rendering of emotive fragments set in relation to symbols of infinity can apprehend with delighted interest the classical conception of a clearly defined and architecturally controlled picture space which distinguishes the pictures of Vermeer."

But it is another matter when Mr. Wilenski concentrates on historical facts, which he interprets with a lively fancy and a picturesque touch. He gives a most illuminating account of the life of the times, of the historical circumstances in which the Dutch pictures were painted and of the manner in which they reflected their surroundings. And he makes us realise keenly the drama of Dutch painting, how Hals lived and died a drunkard, how Rembrandt soon lost his early clientele, gained through his influential first wife, how Vermeer was overlooked, and the genre painters were only bought by the bourgeoisie while the aristocracy favoured the more showy furniture art that displayed all the approved Italian and French influences. Cornelis of Haarlem, the artist who outstripped Hals in popularity at Haarlem is now practically unknown; likewise the other painters who are mentioned by Mr. Wilenski as belonging to the fashionable group, Paul Moreelse, Dirk Van Baburen, Abraham Bloemart. It is by no means a law of history that the big artist must be neglected, but it usually happens that while the charming and exuberant art wins early popularity, the art that is concerned with tragedy or sadness may at first be strongly disliked. The majority will sooner take false charm than entertain the truthful statement. It funks life as a whole, and Rembrandt saw life nearly whole. Thus Mr. Wilenski quotes a contemporary popular painter, Gerard de Lairesse, who wrote of Rembrandt that he was a "master capable of nothing but vulgar and prosaic subjects who merely achieved an effect of nothingness."

Nevertheless the fashionable artists were no mean painters in spite of the slight artificiality of their approach to their subjects. As Mr. Wilenski points out, they produced very attractive and decorative furniture pictures of groups of figures and classical landscapes, and it is here that Mr. Wilenski's book has value as a piece of criticism. He does impress his readers with a sense of the merits of these Dutch Romanist and Baroque artists for whom he obviously cherishes a real sympathy. In fact at bottom he likes them to the exclusion from favour of the greater part of the genre painters, because his aesthetic theory is not big enough to include both types. He condemns the genre painters as recorders of photographic scenes and painters merely of dresses, stuffs and interiors, oblivious of the fact that they expressed in a unique way their love of these homely scenes and objects. And fundamentally, Mr. Wilenski is hoist with his own petard. He condemns subject in pictures; yet he states contemptuously that Terborch and De Metsu merely paint clothes. The subject then makes the goodness or badness of a picture! It is because Mr. Wilenski admires only the architectural composition of a painting that he fails to see that there is also an intrinsic value in the painting of a carpet or a silk dress. Mr. Wilenski has done good service in attempting to revive interest in the "furniture" pictures and bad service in depreciating the sometimes very exquisite genre painters.

HOWARD HANNAY

MUSIC

BEETHOVEN

SOME time last year, M. Romain Rolland knotted up all the contortions of rhetoric into an appreciation of Beethoven, which has now been excellently translated by Mr. Ernest Newman under the title of *Beethoven the Creator*. (Gollancz. 30s.) Nobody has so far succeeded in capturing that angry, sumptuous personality by words, or in reproducing the ceaseless percussion and tumult which beat upon the mind and heart of Beethoven long after his soundless ears rejected them. Nor has M. Rolland done very much better than his predecessors. The whole book is written in an enthusiastic, chiming manner which in French looks so well, and in English so dizzy and uncomfortable. It is a sad thing when criticism of the *Appassionata* uses a simple musical occasion to write " [It] expresses the implacable force of the Destiny that subdues the shudders of the revolting soul, suddenly smitten to its knees and subsiding from cries to silent tears. Finally the vast sad resignation of exhaustion, the knell-like sighs, the expiring breath." This kind of ingenuous nonsense should not be allowed to leave the strait-lacing of a Queen's Hall programme. Persons of perception might be allowed to realize that it is no use whining for real moonlight out of a real bottle. It can only be a kind of margarine-moonlight, a synthetic glitter that is given us in that relentless sonata ; so that impetuous fancies like M. Rolland's do no more than clash with the composer and infuriate his audience.

But there are also better things in the book. For instance, a picture of

this Beethoven whose bad manners the good Princess Lichnowsky has patiently polished, and who affects to despise fashion but for all that carries his chin well up over his fine white three-deep cravat, and out of the corner of his eye looks proudly and with satisfaction (though at heart a little uneasy) at the effect he is creating on the company, this Beethoven who dances (but how ?), this Beethoven who rides a horse (unhappy animal !), this Beethoven whose charming humour, whose hearty laugh, whose delight in life, whose concealed grace and elegance (very much concealed and yet there !) finds expression in ravishing works like the Bonn *Ritterballet*. . . .

The most irritating thing about M. Rolland is his habit of taking Beethoven entirely for granted, of throwing his subject complacently at us with the assurance of a cook who produces an unexceptionable nursery pudding. It is very wholesome, very gratifying to the stomach, but the palate is left entirely out of account. We are to love Beethoven because he is good for us, just as at another age we were to love our sago.

Alas, though, for this generation much of what Beethoven had to say has no meaning at all. The Alps are no longer the end of the world when I know that all Switzerland and Italy lie beyond, and to confess that Beethoven was capable of expressing any but the simplest emotions in a simple manner, to acknowledge him the echo of my own heart, would be to blind myself to the world about, to move my home to the sightless stupidity of Nashville, Tennessee.

He did all he could with the means at his disposal, but he had not so keen a civilization, so well-tempered a box of tools, at his disposal even as Brahms, nor had Brahms such possibilities as the present-day composers, whose horizons are now stretched further until they have reached a remoteness where no genius stupendous enough to chart them can yet be discovered. Already Beethoven is a lessened delight, soon he

will be a survival, a tall, lost, unknown, monument beside a new and greater beauty; Stonehenge beside St. Peter's. His very aspirations will be his undoing. Haydn, who attempted less, will remain longer, while Beethoven, defeated in a grander battle, falls back among the fogeys, and stays behind with outworn veterans. Whatever may happen to his music, Beethoven the person will still be alive; there will still be a start of excitement at the name of Bonn. Meanwhile M. Rolland can give a start of excitement at any name brought near to Beethoven, an excitement legitimate if incommunicable, and, in this instance, handed down by Mr. Gollancz to posterity, clothed in a dashing purple wrapper, exquisitely printed and illustrated, all for the sum of thirty shillings.

GRAMOPHONES

Columbia have lately issued many attractive records, of which some of the best are the four of Stravinsky's *Oiseau de feu* (L2279—82), played by the Orchestre Symphonique under the composer. The music loses a good deal when it is divorced from action and setting, nor can the composer's sanguine expectation that any of his works can be cast in another form without loss to the hearer be fulfilled when he is content merely with re-naming a ballet a piece of abstract music. *L' Oiseau de Feu* can never be anything but a ballet, never anything but unintelligible to those who have not made its first acquaintance on the stage. Still it is very excellently recorded, and it makes a pleasant memorial of the oriental passions and routs of the real thing. A delightful relic of a vanished stage is brought back by the records of the overture to Rossini's *Semiramide*, conducted by Malajoli, and played by the Milan Symphony Orchestra (9663—4). Perhaps the opening crescendo does not make us cry out with the excitement of its first Italian audiences, but the whole overture is full of fine, spanking tunes that catch the ear and warm one's sympathies for this neglected composer. Most of Rossini's best work is in his overtures, of which even the obscurest, such as *Elisabetta*, overflow with high spirits, and with that special kind of arch jollity that roguish dowagers (apparently) used to dispense with a tap of the fan.

A quite new work is issued which is interesting but arid—Gabriel Pierre's *Sonata da Camra* (5275—7). It is quite short and quite agreeable, but it leaves no sediment in the mind after it is finished, and no impression other than of a graceful composer toying half-heartedly with mechanical complexities. Among other modern composers, de Falla is recorded in an arrangement for the violin of four numbers from his *Suite Populaire Espagnole*, played by René Benedetti (9584). The already well-known *Jota* is the most successful, but each of them has a ready and fanciful humour. I have only heard one organ and one vocal record from Columbia, but both of them are exceptional. The organ record is of Franck's exquisite *Pastorale*, a calm and refreshing delight, most sensitively played. The collection of Franck's recorded works is steadily growing, until it is time that some of his piano works were remembered—the *Prelude, Choral and Fugue*, for instance. The vocal record is by Guglielmetti, who sings *Sempre libera* from *La Traviata* on one side, and the far lovelier *Ah ! non giunge*, from *La Sonnambula*, on the other. In either, the human voice is instrumentalized entirely, sentiment is thrown away for a volley of the most impressive fireworks.

The only two Brunswick records I have heard are a magnificent set of the *Polovtsian Dances* (10270—1) from *Prince Igor*, played by Sokoloff and the Cleveland Orchestra, and a recording of the little-heard Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* played by Hayden Draper (20076—8). The clarinet is tiring to listen to for long, and I did not find this work very interesting.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

POETRY

GOLD COAST CUSTOMS AND OTHER POEMS. By EDITH SITWELL. Duckworth. 5s.

TRIVIAL BREATH. By ELINOR WYLIE. Knopf. 7s. 6d.

ANGELS AND EARTHLY CREATURES. By ELINOR WYLIE. Knopf. 7s. 6d.

THE BUCK IN THE SNOW AND OTHER POEMS. By EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. Harper. 5s.

AFTER-THOUGHTS. By ROBERT BELL. Methuen. 4s. 6d.

THERE is a lot of synthetic poetry about. We seem to owe this to the rising science of analytical aesthetics, as we owe our plethora of face-creams to our progress in organic chemistry. Like the face-creams, the poetry is superficially very varied, urging many different kinds of reasons for its existence and claiming to confer all sorts of benefits, from a spiritual, physical or mental sense of well-being to a smoothing of the paths of Love ; but in effect the formulas behind its varieties are much alike. They are variations on the axiom that a poet is a person who detects hitherto unsuspected relationships between ideas, and their differences chiefly depend on the amount of emphasis which they placed on "unsuspected."

The school of poetic thought which first gave its works to the world in the periodical called *Wheels* holds that if one mixes metaphors in sufficiently unsuspected ways one has the substance of a poem. There is some slight justification for this view. A mixed metaphor is at once an emotional and an intellectual thing, and it certainly saves space. But the *Wheels* school went on to formulate a method whereby its wishful poets might obtain large supplies of raw material. The initiate regards an object fixedly until its leading characteristics have become blurred ; then, in the place of these, he grafts the leading characteristics of some other object which, not having been regarded at all fixedly, is in consequence bright and fresh. Thus he may cause the sea to lose its distinguishing colours, noises and surges, and become remarkable for its amber portals, its parrot plumes or its tight monkey-skin. Or he may provoke phenomena which ordinarily affect one sense to afflict his reader in another, as when he imitates the cacophony of light, or describes the pale green notes of the flute. This process he repeats indefinitely. The *Wheels* school is understood to venerate William Blake as its spiritual founder. It is already ten years old and, while disciples come and go, the unfailing presence and unflagging energies of Miss Edith Sitwell, its first principal, continue to preserve it from decay.

It would not be seemly to deny that Miss Sitwell, deep within herself, is a true poet, or that, in that fastness, she increases in power. But she remains so loyal to her first formula that, although in her new book she has more to say than ever before, and takes loftier and broader views, her poems are still clogged by masses of exhausted perceptions which have been galvanised into unnatural activity. *Gold Coast Customs*, the title-poem, has the framework of a good satire. There used to be niggers on the beach at Scarborough ; human nature is much the same the world over ; the son of the cannibal king is reading for the Bar ; Mayfair is dancing to the tom-tom ; there is more vice, more squalor (and less to eat) in Limehouse than way back where the Congo fetidly flows ; the Daimler can be no less an instrument of primitive tyranny than the carving-knife. The poem was conceived on some such system of observations. But that framework is almost lost under the weird growths with which it is quite pointlessly encumbered. In the African scenes, light squeals, grass creaks, the

sea behaves like Harry on Bank Holiday, and the lowly mud (being, by reason of its prospective, or recent, animation, already a long way advanced in the scale of vociferousness) carries on dreadfully; in Dockland the houses flap, and in Park Lane, Lady Banburgher has an "apeskin yellow" thus ridiculously and quite unhelpfully resembling the sea. As for the cries and crests of parrots, they are everywhere in evidence. If this were Miss Sitwell's first book, one might at least forgive the tropical goings-on. It might not then be difficult to believe that books about Africa do indeed work upon her sensibility to that extent. But she has cried "Hyena" too often in our quiet parks and select watering-places. The reader's nerve is shattered and his confidence is quite gone. Except that things are now *fortissimo* all the time, he is conscious that he might as well be receiving her impressions in those haunts of childhood near the Peak and under the lights of pirouetting Yorkshire, which Mr. Mégroz has described so historically, Mr. Osbert Sitwell so sharply and Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell so beautifully and so treacherously *pianissimo*. Can it be that a few parrots and nigger-minstrels have diverted one of the streams of Helicon? Certainly it is unsettling to come, among so much knuckle-bone music, upon a magical couplet like this:

. . . the snowflake's six-rayed star can see
Rock-crystal's cold six-rayed eternity

closing a dark, and darkened, but powerful interlude on Death.

Much of the late Elinor Wylie's verse also has an artificial look. One feels about her, as one feels about many women who divide their talents between fiction and verse, that she liked to wear fancy-dress when writing her poetry and that she preferred to invoke persons also wearing fancy-dress—Sheikh's costume, as often as not. All the same, I think it would be unfair to class her, or any woman, among the manufacturing poets because of a little over-dramatisation. A woman's fantasy is as often naturally dramatic as a man's is musical.

Underneath her high-coloured and exotic images, her verse is simple, sometimes poignant in its simplicity. She meets a man much younger than herself, and fences with the possibility of love at first sight:

He might have been my son, save that my youth,
Bending the slender bow of its despair,
Loosed no such luminous arrow on the air;
His shaft was cut from some diviner bough:
And while my fainting heart perceived the truth,
My tongue spoke thus: "He cannot hurt me now".

That looks somewhat garish, and is awkwardly put, but it goes very deep. It is one of perhaps ten thrills in *Trivial Breath*—and they are thrills of the kind one gets from Emily Dickinson. *Angels and Earthly Creatures* which she set in order the day before she died, is a more even and a shorter book, but it has rather more thrills.

There is little that is high-coloured in the work of Miss Millay, and it is remarkably free from metaphors and even from adjectives. Her drama, what there is of it, is quiet and refined, a mere evening-dress recitation compared with the glitter and posturing of *Trivial Breath*. In subtilty she is a match for any poet in America. And yet, somehow, I cannot like these poems so well as Elinor Wylie's. There is hardly one which has not some exquisite turn of phrase; on the other hand, apart from the title-poem, which is a perfect piece of description, there is little that one remembers when the book is shut. One has had a great deal of pleasure, but it has been the renewal of old pleasures, and not the creation of new. Miss

Millay seems to be using her lovely musical intonation mainly to recite the songs of other poets. She collaborates with Mr. Masfield :

Greater am I
By the earth's girth
Than Mighty Death,
All creatures cry
That can summon breath
And speak no lie.

with Mr. Kipling :

Triumphant up the taken field
The tractor and the plough advance,

with Mr. A. E. Housman :

The cuckoo spoke from out the wood,
The lark from out the sky.
Embraced upon the highway stood
Lovesick you and I.

and with Thomas Hardy :

Clear and diminished like a scene cut in cameo,
The lighthouse, and the boat on the beach, and the two shapes
Of the woman and the man ; lost like the lost day
Are the words that passed, and the pain, discarded, cut away
From the stone, as from the memory the heat of the tears escape.

When she speaks identifiably in her own person she seems to lack definition of thought and formal perception. She likens summer to a jewelled fish which slips from the hand, and asks a Beethoven symphony not to cease. If I may hazard guesses, I should say there is a large proportion of early work in this volume, that Miss Millay has been tidying up, and that her next volume will be strong and new.

Mr. Bell has no difficulty about finding relationships between ideas. He needs no method of metaphors, plays no parts, and does not hitch his waggons to stars. He has, apparently, only to open a box of matches, or dodge a motor-car, to have images and moralisations appearing before him in steady procession. Those who follow him religiously as "Observer" in a Sunday paper know all about this rapidity of imagination, but they would probably not suspect his extraordinary powers of versification. He does not attempt the last refinements of music and high seriousness ; but he writes epigrams and *vers de société* with the cadences of Heine. For the rest, he can do many of the latest tricks as well as that hyper-modern poet, Lewis Carroll. He can disassociate his associations with the best of them, as in the *Ballade on the Lord Mayor's Show* :

Oh, stranger metamorphosis
Than ever fairy wand assayed !
Let us not ask whose fault it is,
By what godmother's potent aid
A Myth may to a Mayor fade—
A connoisseur of terrapins—
Lest we should find her name is Trade—
But once he was a Fairy Prince.

It is to be hoped that this little book is only a beginning. I cannot see why he should not give us a poem a day. Surely he eats as well as smokes, and gets on and off buses, as well as avoids them. And, later on, what about that translation of Heine which England is still awaiting ?

E. G. TWITCHETT

FICTION

THE BOROUGHMONGER. By R. H. MOTTRAM. Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

NO LOVE. By DAVID GARNETT. Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

STEPPENWOLF. By HERMANN HESSE. Secker. 7s. 6d.

EAST SOUTH EAST. By F. V. MORLEY. Longmans. 7s. 6d.

THE WORLD BELOW. By S. FOWLER WRIGHT. Collins. 7s. 6d.

MR. MOTTRAM pursues his studies of Norwich in earlier days. Or, at least, that must be presumed to be his object in this book, since that is what is left clearest in the mind at the end of it. But, whatever his object may have been, he has not kept his eye very steadily upon it, and he is not the sort of novelist who can do several things at once. There is a story—rather, there are two stories, one, left very much in the air, of Mr. Carston and his putative father, Lord Carstone, who leads him into a Parliamentary contest for no particular reason that can be discovered and then withdraws his support for no reason that is plainly disclosed, the other of Mr. Carston and the niece of his bear-leader, the Rector of Hoake. There seems also to be some attempt at a study, in rather ironic tone, of the political contacts between provincial society and the landed nobility in Reform days. And there are the successive scenes of life in the town, emphasised by the fact that the chapters are entitled “The George”, “The Moot Hall”, “The Church”, and so forth. Mr. Mottram has never given any indication of the ability to drive a four-in-hand successfully and does not in fact do so. His novel leaves a blurred impression on the mind out of which the county town and all the complicated ramifications of its social life struggle hopefully towards a greater definiteness than the rest. Lord Carstone is a “costume part” to which Mr. Mottram has not been able to communicate any new life, and Mr. Carston is a stick. The Rector’s niece, however, is so vivid a figure in appearance (but in no more) as to make herself a discordant note in the whole composition. On the whole, Mr. Mottram has failed. He exemplifies the truth that the detached manner in fiction is dangerous for an author who does not in fact feel a strong attachment to his characters.

Explanations, too, are very dangerous. Mr. Garnett fortunately avoids spoiling the best (and the most conventional) novel he has yet written until the last two pages. Then Benedict, leaving the friend of his boyhood, says to himself, “What’s wrong with Simon, what’s wrong? I know him as well as I know myself. There’s always been something wrong with him all his life. What’s the reason?”, and eventually answers, “It’s because there’s No Love. No Love in his heart. He has never learned what it is from other people. That’s the explanation. No Love.” The capital letters Mr. Garnett uses in this phrase, the fact that he has made it the title of his book, and its triple occurrence in his final paragraph conspire together to underline his sense of its importance. Nevertheless I think he would have been better without it. So far his persons have made a direct and sharp impression on the mind and they are living enough for us to resent the introduction of a formula (and of one so jejune and question-begging) into their free and various lives. The want of any real understanding of love may have been a just enough accusation to throw at Simon. When he imagined that he was going blind, his first significant action was to ravish the girl

whom he was engaged to marry because he took it for granted that she would throw him over as soon as she learnt of his misfortune. But in this, surely, action speaks louder than words, and Mr. Garnett's elucidation appears highly unnecessary. As a rule the author who descends to this confidential nudging of the reader is one who cannot show his intention through his characters. What is so curious is that Mr. Garnett can and does. His people are all living and strongly individualised. They do odd things at times but never, not even Simon on the occasion which I have mentioned, do they appear incredible or even inexplicable. Mr. Garnett would have done well to have left it at that. As Wagner once said, "In art generally, the way to produce an effect is not by a statement of opinion but by a presentation of the instinctive." Mr. Garnett has acquired a degree of skill in doing this, which, to be quite frank, I should previously have thought altogether out of his reach. The two families on Tinder Island, their sympathies and antipathies and their points of voluntary and involuntary contact, are depicted with a naïvely living freshness. The touches of imaginative insight are delicate but incisive :

Meanwhile the war in the Far East was the constant subject of the Admiral's conversation ; he had no thought for anything else. In the evenings he would frequently rush in to Tinder Hall to tell them the latest news of the Japanese successes. So great, indeed, was his enthusiasm that he gave away a large number of peculiar little brushes to his acquaintances. "The Japanese brush their teeth up and down, not side to side—far more hygienic ; the little tuft of cane searches out all the crevices."

On Tinder Island these brushes became compulsory, and they all brushed their teeth up and down, not side to side, until well after the Treaty of Portsmouth was signed.

Throughout the greater part of his novel Mr. Garnett successfully preserves that attitude of detachment which Mr. Mottram unsuccessfully attempts. He puts them before the reader with something like the brisk, electric coldness of Tolstoy in his best passages. We look at Simon, Cynthia and Benedict and, so clear it is, are unconscious of the magnifying glass the author has provided for us. And, after all, a mistake made in the last paragraph of a novel is not very important : one can take it as unread. But I have laid stress on it because it suggests that Mr. Garnett may sin against his own gifts, may forget how priceless is his power of real detachment. If he does not, and if he will only allow himself sufficient space for this gift to bear fruit (twice as much space, say, as he has used here), he may well become a novelist of the first order. So far he has exercised himself on "stunts" or has floundered about in the endeavour to escape from them. This is a real book, richer and more human by far than anything Mr. Garnett has yet done and richer in promise than in anything else.

There is much about "Steppenwolf" that is alarming. The narrator believes that in him there constantly proceeds a struggle between the one part of his soul that loves an orderly bourgeois existence and the other that is a wolf of the steppes. As if this were not enough, he has mysterious experiences in the style of the Expressionist Drama. A mysterious peddler sells him a pamphlet which turns out, when he gets it home and reads it, to be a treatise on his own peculiar case. He has, further, hallucinations which make a mystical sense. He sees here and there, on blank walls, invitations to an entertainment which is labelled "Not for everybody !" and "For madmen only !" All this summons up memories, and depressing memories, of Georg Kaiser and of all that aftermath of Frank Wedekind, which, under the name of Expressionismus, has so long haunted German literature with more of a charnel smell than is usually considered good manners even in a ghost. But Herr Hesse is something more than one of the Wedekinder. He does convey an impression of a

tormented, but not strictly abnormal, mental state, which is not unreasonably described by the word "Steppenwolf." The book is curiously full of good sense and exact and touching observation. It is also astonishingly well translated by Mr. Basil Creighton.

Mr. Morley follows tradition. We have a glimpse of his boy-hero at home, then of a flight under an unjust accusation, and then we are treated to adventures which are good enough in themselves, but which, even while one is enjoying them, are obviously delaying the beginning of the main adventure. In this manner proceed nearly all adventure-stories written by men who know how to write. They write divided between desire to please themselves and the humble willingness to satisfy a publisher who has definite ideas about the proper length for any novel. They have also, since they are taking a sort of a holiday, some doubt as to whether their imaginary adventure will go as far as it should, and therefore delay over the approaches to it. Mr. Morley has, in fact, overburdened himself with material. The inevitable preliminary episodes are excellent. But, when he seems to have emerged from them, he plunges into another, which exists for its own sake only, and not as a part of any tale. Nevertheless this, the description of whaling, is so good as of itself to stifle all adverse criticism. We have been promised, it is true, a search for hidden treasure and for page after page the promise seems to have been forgotten. But the search for the whale and the events which follow the discovery of the whale are described with so much gusto that the reader, when the thread of the story is resumed, is obliged to blink his eyes and shake himself before he can hurry on after Mr. Morley's characters. When he catches them up, he finds that the effort has not been wasted. Mr. Morley could have written a much better book than this, but the book he has written is so good that any carping at it seems ungrateful.

The World Below consists, as to its first 186 pages, of a novel published by Mr. Fowler Wright in 1925 and reprinted in 1926. I have not compared the two versions with great care, but with enough to satisfy myself that there cannot be any serious difference between them. The remainder carries on the story of a man projected into the world of half a million years hence. When he gave us his first instalment of this vision, Mr. Wright said in his preface that "it contains some allusions and incidents which are unexplained or inconsequent . . . and so, I think, it should do." The argument is logically sound: the world of that age would be impossible to explain in the course of three hundred pages. But the novelist, I think, ought not to undertake a vision of the future in these terms. Let him be as logical as he can, but, before anything else, let him convey some exact meaning to his readers. Mr. Fowler Wright's invention is extraordinarily fertile and I make no doubt that, with a sufficient challenge, he could produce good reasons for all the monstrous shapes which are here depicted. But that does not prevent his world of the future from being, as presented, tediously meaningless to me.

I cannot part from this book without dwelling for a moment upon the dust-jacket in which it is clothed, and wishing that I could have from the artist his account of the text which he has so unexpectedly illustrated.

EDWARD SHANKS

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM

ARMOUR FOR APHRODITE. By T. STURGE MOORE. Grant Richards, at the Cayme Press. 8s. 6d.

THE GEORGIAN NOVEL AND MR. ROBINSON. By STORM JAMESON. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL. By CARL H. GRABO. Scribner. 6s.

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL—THE ELIZABETHAN AGE AND AFTER. By ERNEST A. BAKER. Witherby. 16s.

ESSAYS AND STUDIES BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION. VOL. XIV. Collected by H. W. GARROD. Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN WRITERS. By WILLIAM A. DRAKE. Harrap. 10s. 6d.

IT will not be the publisher's fault if Mr. Sturge Moore's prettily-named *Armour for Aphrodite* does not bring a long-delayed recognition to a long-forgotten poet. The book is finely printed and extremely cheap—that is the publisher's praise ; the author's needs a more careful pondering. Mr. Sturge Moore has always been obstinately interested in aesthetics : his other prose books, and some of his poems, teem with witness. He has always tried to make his own way through a very dark forest, perplexed with light and almost utterly unpathed. He has set himself to distinguish and value those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul. In the past he has given heed to Flaubert and Blake, but now he is not much inclined to discipleship. His present thesis is : " Taste has become increasingly perplexed by fashion and entangled in theory, till liking finds no free way in us." Locusts and wild honey seem to be his proper food, but he is no raging prophet ; no cloudy portents hang round his loins, no chariot of fire updraws him from human commerce. He is a prophet, but one of mild manners and well-turned speech—the voice perhaps a little husky but sweet and humane, the phrasing sometimes lax but always eager:

The inauguration of an aesthetic life is advocated, which, though it never attain the ideal, will, in proportion to the devotion with which it is pursued, become ever richer and more self-consistent : since loyalty to liking proves to be the test and transformer of the statement, "This is the most beautiful," into "No, I was mistaken, this other is still more so," and, followed up, proceeds to freely recanvass the result till the process is repeated. By this application of the experimental method, not as in science to observed facts and the discovery of reality, but to respected preferences and the discovery of the congenial, beauty may for ever be approached, even as science is for ever arriving nearer and yet nearer to truth.

The value as well as the charm of his book comes from the fact that he is blissfully thinking things out for himself. He is telling of his inward experience when he is pressing you to seek your own. Enlarge your experience, he cries ; stagnation is death ; there is no such thing as still life ; admiration is living, coolness is a dying ; those alone see beauty who admire it ; to admire is to venture greatly and happily, for we do not know whither loyal admiration may lead us ; aesthetically considered, the " truth " of a poem is secondary and never can form its chief value, even the *Iliad* and *Othello* being measured, finally, by the perfection of the admiration they

beget. Mere discrimination of good from bad, of greater from lesser good, is unavailing : " What avails it to discriminate good from less good, if you do not like it better ? Otherwise you merely recollect by rote from past experience, which can never be so extensive as to include all possible discovery. The beauty never met before cannot be recognized but *only felt and enjoyed*, preferred for its own sake, not for what is known about it."

Mr. Sturge Moore is old enough to have seen the rise and fall of critical despotisms and now, surviving in a period of indirection and confusion, he is still courageous and happy. He may gibe, gently enough, at Crocean speculations, but he has no time for denunciation ; he is like St. Francis among the birds, feeding them and being fed by them. He would rather talk of what he loves than of what he hates, and in his own earnestly dogmatic way would teach us to distrust dogma. He seeks to kindle us with his own fire, but does not demand that fire for the service of his private altar. " Increase liking, and you get passion and devotion. . . . When both liking and wonder are focussed in intensity, creative power appears."

It is, you perceive, no thin-lipped and reserved assent that he demands, when his imaginary spectator or reader is confronted with a living image ; and you are not surprised to find, on reading him a little closely, that his aesthetic fervour is ultimately a moral fervour. " Nor is it," he affirms, in the midst of other very definite affirmations, " Nor is it matter of indifference when a work of art hints that its author was demented, degraded or vicious : such art cannot rival the equal beauty of works associated with sane and lofty minds." Does this imply a timid and narrow spiritual experience ? Not so :

But the poet should be complete man, not a specialist, save in the art of verse : his function resumes all others under the spell of perfect speech, musical, sensuous, lucid, direct ; for all interests are related to his as they are to language.

He proceeds to say inconsequently—for he leaves you to follow his thought as best you can, over hill, over dale—that man can never be sure that any object is beautiful by which he has not been profoundly moved ; hence his insistence upon surrender and not stiffness, upon welcome and not suspicion. The mistakes of praise are not corrosive, as are the mistakes of distrust, and it is with a prophetic fervour that he urges his reader to a more ready and natural receptiveness :—Eat because you are hungry, rather than do defiance to your appetite.—This book of experimental aesthetics, so personal, so eager, so disinterested, can best be praised in Mr. Moore's own phrase :

He opes the gate,
Then all his thoughts troop in, as to a fold
At night the sheep.

He brings " to callow souls live, warm and gentle thoughts."

Very much more sprightly and amusing, in the best modern manner, is Miss Storm Jameson on *The Georgian Novel and Mr. Robinson*. She is more than amusing when she says that Shakespeare (" like a man living in a room with windows all round ") is so fully and magnificently his age that he is also ours and all ages ; but the Georgian novelist is not his age, he is only a part of it—its unrest, questioning and smile ; and she adds, surprisingly, that to the immense stirring of new life, the expectation and the accomplishment of modern science, he is a stranger. This is an instance of the candour that makes her essay valuable, another being her suggestion that Mrs. Woolf, in her disappointing *Orlando*, lacks humanity. Why should it be left to Miss Jameson to speak candidly and do justice ? I wish she would lecture again, on *The Georgian Critics and Mr. Robinson*.

A part of her subject touches the theme of Professor Grabo's *Technique of the Novel*, an exposition of practice rather than theory, designed primarily to teach the young novelist the tricks of his trade. I suppose that, if he can learn them at all, he can learn them without being taught, but Professor Grabo's manual should be useful to critics who can't learn anything without being taught. He is decidedly interesting and not always conventional. The "new methods," towards which Miss Jameson looks expectantly, arouse suspicion in him, for the modern novels employing them seldom keep their interest to the end, perhaps because the end—as in *Ulysses*—is so unconscionably far from the beginning. His complaint is that it is "a life all surfaces, pictorial, and behaviouristic, that much of the new fiction portrays;" and thus the technical resources of new methods, though he thinks so little of them, are still the chief merit of the new fiction. What he says about the new fiction would be more interesting if it were adequately contrasted with the older, his treatment of Trollope, Melville, Mr. George Moore and Mr. Arnold Bennett, being inadequate; but that, I suppose, is because he has less than three-hundred pages for his subject, and certainly has not wasted them upon redundancies of style and opinion.

Dr. Baker's *History of the English Novel* is a determined, dour record of the Elizabethan novel and its immediate successors, and follows an earlier record of the novel from the beginning to the Renaissance. It is so comprehensive that it includes an outline of the story of *Arcadia* and *The Groat's-Worth of Witte*; it gives extracts and comments, and contains a long chapter on "The Writers of Character" from Nicholas Breton to the author of Sir Roger. Industry like Dr. Baker's is a credit to the race of man, and is of itself almost sufficient to distinguish man from monkeys.

The fourteenth volume of *Essays and Studies* by members of the English Association is at once more easily readable and more obviously scholarly. Miss Janet Spens writes most happily of Charlotte Brontë who, in Lucy Snowe, "gives utterance to the Infinity within her creator. *The intensity of pain in Villette* guarantees its author's immortality." Mr. H. G. Wright contributes an attractive information upon Tennyson and Wales; Professor Nichol Smith writes on Johnson's *Irene*, an essay which ought to have been written years and years ago and is therefore only the more welcome now; and Professor Elton on *The Poet's Dictionary*, an all too brief introduction to an extensive subject. There are other papers in this volume, which comes as a reminder of the admirable work of the Association in bringing together critic and reader, the erudite and the ignorant, in a common loyalty to English studies.

Mr. William A. Drake's *Contemporary European Writers* escapes me: I cannot attempt to look at it critically, for it surveys the work of forty-one writers (none of them English), of almost as many nations. Even for an old man of thirty, for that is the publisher's statement of the author's age, Mr. Drake has read prodigiously and apparently remembered all he has ever read or heard of. Nevertheless, he presents this volume with a diffidence which, he says, the reader will understand, though the reader will hardly divine it for himself. The book consists of reprinted reviews and articles contributed to an American weekly, and it is surprising that such articles, which seem so omniscient and frightening when you look at them at odd times in the American press, should be so readable when collected and read in a crowd. It is not surprising, on the other hand, that when you reach the four hundredth page, you feel that there is little to distinguish one subject from another, no matter what his nationality; all of them must be, you imagine, among the best productions of General Motors, smooth, lively, efficient, impersonal, with standard parts always available.

JOHN FREEMAN

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. Secker. 21s.

THE LIFE OF A SEA OFFICER. By JEFFREY, BARON DE RAIGERSFELD. With an Introduction by L. G. CARR LAUGHTON. (The Seafarers' Library). Cassell. 10s. 6d.

MEMOIRS OF CAPTAIN CARLETON. Edited by C. H. HARTMANN. Routledge. 10s. 6d.

MEMOIRS OF LEONORA CHRISTINA. Translated by F. E. BUNNETT. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

A SOLDIER'S DIARY OF THE GREAT WAR. With an Introduction by HENRY WILLIAMSON. Faber and Gwyer. 7s. 6d.

L.M.8046. By DAVID W. KING. Arrowsmith. 5s.

IT has been said that we make a mistake when we prevent even the dullest of people from talking about themselves, since that is the subject they are most interested in, and therefore most likely to have ideas about. The club bore would probably be even more boring if he ever attempted any other topic. But while this may be true enough in regard to conversation, it remains a fact that it is apparently the most difficult task in the world to write a satisfactory autobiography. Indeed one of the main differences between a biography and an autobiography is that the first usually appears to have been written by someone who thoroughly knows and understands his subject, and the second by a purblind, prejudiced, one-sided critic who does not know what he is taking about. The fact is that the autobiographer stands too close to his subject to see it whole. It is not that he has not thought about it; he has thought so much about it that his ideas are all muddled. He is that kind of man. If he were one of those people, blessed by heaven, who can see the humour in themselves as well as in their neighbours, the probability is that he would never have consented to write his autobiography. The autobiographer (as distinguished from the ordinary writer of memoirs) is a man passionately excited about himself, or about something that has happened to himself. He nearly always has some axe to grind, some quarrel to pursue. Even the great Benvenuto could not resist dragging in, on every second page, some anecdote to illustrate his superiority as an artist and the jealous intrigues against him of lesser men. These passages have to-day only historical interest, and not very much of that. And it may be that Lord Alfred Douglas's autobiography will share the same fate—that generations hence, when it is entirely forgotten by the ordinary reader, it will still be pored over by students in the reading-room of the British Museum, as one of the best personal descriptions of that strange group of *fin-de-siècle* "intellectuals" who revolved round the dazzling (if somewhat rotund) figure of the brilliant Oscar Wilde. If so, we may take it as certain that not one of those students will care twopence whether Lord Alfred was right or wrong, more sinned against or sinning. The personal quarrel will not interest them at all. Indeed it has almost ceased to interest us to-day.

One would have expected Lord Alfred Douglas—a poet of distinction, a journalist and polemical writer of marked ability—to have seen this for himself. He does not. He has so persistently lived over and over again the scenes and quarrels of his youth that he has ceased to realise that they are ancient history. He has even persuaded

himself, not only that such a group as the Wilde set still exists in London—no doubt it does, though this particular form of moral perversion is much more popular in dirty Oriental villages—but that they form a large part of the metropolitan population ! “ We all do it,” he exclaims, “ at one time or other of our lives.” And again : “ I am quite ready to admit that [that he was “ very wicked ”], provided it is accepted that ninety per cent. of my contemporaries were exactly the same.” Ninety per cent ! Think of them, with their mutton-chop whiskers, their Tennysons and Brownings and Gilbert and Sullivan operas ! I suppose that must be one of the silliest statements ever committed to paper by any sane man. Yet Lord Alfred Douglas has convinced himself (pathetic delusion) that he is now “ able to look back and see my career as if it were the career of someone else.” He also remarks that “ it has been the passion of my life to sacrifice myself for others.” As a matter of fact, no one has ever questioned his generosity—nor, if it comes to that, his courage, pugnacity and fundamental honesty. It may not, therefore, be too late to make an appeal to him. Let him sacrifice this nasty, mouldy King Charles’s head of his, and give us at last an ordinary book of memoirs—something “ objective ” about the many interesting people he has met. No one could write it better—as this admirably written book abundantly proves.

The men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on the other hand, never thought it worth their while to write their autobiographies unless their lives had been unusually full of incident. That—not their state of mind—was the criterion. Take for instance Baron Jeffrey de Raigersfeld, R.N., the latest of the wonderful discoveries of Mr. G. E. Manwaring, general editor of the “ Seafarers’ Library.” Raigersfeld never supposes that we shall be interested in his personality. He goes further, unfortunately, and assumes an equal indifference towards his contemporaries and brother officers. He merely records events. Yet his book does supply a picture of the Navy in Nelson’s time which the publishers rightly describe as “ unique.” The food, for instance :

So very seldom was it that fresh provisions could be had at this time in the West Indies, that the captain of the hold used to catch rats (of which there was an abundance in the ship) in the night, and by eight in the morning generally four of five rats were ready cleaned and spread out as butchers dress sheep for the amateurs ; and those who purchased the rats for a relish, had only to pepper and salt them well, broil them in the galley, and they were found nice and delicate eating ; so that this captain of the hold’s fishing, for he caught them by a hook and line, became a source of profit. As to the rats, they fed off the best of the ship’s provisions, such as biscuit, flour, peas, etc., and they were full as good as rabbits, although not so large.

There follows a revolting discussion of the rival merits of the different kinds of weevils and maggots which inhabited the ship’s biscuits. The “ large white maggots with black heads ” were considered the best. These maggots were “ fat and cold to the taste, but not bitter.” Worst of all is the story of the bald mouse : I simply cannot bring myself to repeat it. Under such conditions did our ancestors win the Battle of Trafalgar ! Raigersfeld, the son of an Austrian diplomat, was a dull, self-centred, conceited person. He was never in a fleet action, or even in a good single ship engagement, and so he missed promotion and acquired his grievance. It is clear that he was fairly popular with the men, but unpopular with his brother officers. The most valuable part of his book deals with his experiences as a prisoner of war in France, and includes the excellent story of his escape ; but it is characteristic of him that he never so much as mentions the name of another prisoner. A soft point in his character is his love of art. And he is right in thinking—this dull man—that what we want to

hear about is not what he was, but what he did. He has a better sense of proportion than modern autobiographers. Again I congratulate Mr. Manwaring—and Mr. L. G. Carr Laughton, who has contributed a delightful introduction.

“Audax” has recently been teaching us that the surest way to attract attention is to go and hide. There is no publicity like anonymity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the most anonymous of all writers, Daniel Defoe, is not only one of the most famous, but has also been credited with the authorship of a large number of books which he never wrote—he who had strenuously denied the authorship even of *Robinson Crusoe*. It is a little irony of history which no one would have enjoyed more than Defoe. He is reputed to have acted as literary “ghost” to Mother Ross—that eighteenth-century Colonel Barker, who differed from her modern imitator in having actually served at the front under Marlborough and received two wounds before her sex was discovered—to the explorer Dampier—who had an easily recognisable style of his own—and to many others. For years he was assumed to be the author of the *Memoirs of Captain Carleton*, an eighteenth-century best-seller, apparently on no other grounds than that the book was so admirably written. Now, at last, Captain Carleton recovers his rights, for the present editor, Mr. Hartmann, proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Carleton, and no other, was the author of Carleton’s memoirs. So much for the judgment of Hazlitt and other cocksure Victorians. The book is a good example of its kind. Carleton served at sea against the Dutch in 1672, and afterwards as an engineer officer under Lord Peterborough in Spain. He has that happy gift of fluent, easy narrative which in his day was by no means confined to Defoe. Uniform with this book, in the same series, is that curious work, the *Memoirs of Leonora Christina*, daughter of Christian IV of Denmark, an unfortunate lady who spent a large part of her life in prison but never lost her sense of humour.

A Soldier’s Diary of the Great War strikes me as a well-balanced account of the matter—in that respect almost as good as Mr. Blunden’s. Most war diarists have recorded only the dark hours. Like inverted sun-dials they have stood on their heads in the Flanders mud, seeing nothing but dirt and worms. It was not all like that; and the time has come when we may be allowed to say so. The only thing that puzzles me about this excellent little book is Mr. Henry Williamson’s introduction. He seems to discover nothing in the War but “infamy”—which is not at all the author’s point of view. *L.M.*8046 is another soldier’s diary, written by an American who served with the French Foreign Legion. It also is good, but too often marred by a deliberate artificiality.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

ENGLISH GRAMMAR & LANGUAGE

SOCIETY FOR PURE ENGLISH: TRACT No. XXIX. SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH. By GEORGE GORDON. TRACT No. XXX. AMERICAN PRONUNCIATION. By H. KURATH. WORDS FROM THE FRENCH, -ê, -ée. By MATTHEW BARNES. PRONUNCIATION OF "CLOTHES." By ROBERT BRIDGES. Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d. each.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE. By WALTER PILLSBURY and CLARENCE L. MEADER. Appleton. 10s. 6d.

MODERN ENGLISH IN THE MAKING. By GEORGE H. McKNIGHT. Appleton. 16s.

USE AND ABUSE OF ENGLISH. By ROSALINE MASSON. James Thin. 1s. 6d.

THE PLACE-NAMES OF THE NORTH RIDING OF YORKSHIRE. By A. H. SMITH. Cambridge University Press. 20s.

AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE. By OTTO JESPERSEN. Allen and Unwin. 4s. 6d.

SOMEBODY, probably a Frenchman, has said that a language is made by the people. This may be true of language in its more primitive stages, but it certainly does not apply to most of the developments that have taken place since the invention of printing. The spoken English of our own day owes much of its colour and ornament to the American journalist and to the strange genius who writes the cinema "captions," while literary English is almost entirely the creation of the great Elizabethans, whose language is described by Mr. Gordon as "an attractive chaos." Only the student of language can realize the amazing transformation of our vocabulary in the half-century or so covered by Shakespeare's life. Only the student of Shakespeare can realize that, if Shakespeare had never been born, modern English would have been something very different. It is true that the mere fact that a word is first recorded in Shakespeare does not prove that he was its coiner. We have no gramophone records of Elizabethan colloquial speech, and, to quote Mr. Gordon :

The language of Shakespeare has been more thoroughly registered and more curiously scrutinized than that of any other English writer, and his less considerable predecessors are still imperfectly known.

But, when all reserves are made, the debt of English to Shakespeare remains stupefying in its mass and importance. His contributions range from such colloquialisms as "cudgelling one's brains," "falling to blows," "grovelling," "laying the odds," "what the dickens," etc., to those poetic compounds, such as "proud-pied April," "heaven-kissing hill," which, as Mr. Gordon says, "deformed the prose of the Elizabethans as much as they adorned their poetry." The later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, striving "to reduce the products of the imagination to the level of the so much esteemed common sense" (McKnight), did their best to forget this gorgeous language, but the Romantics re-discovered it. Mr. Gordon quotes many Shakespearean words with a two-century gap in their history, e.g., "gibber," not found between *Hamlet* and Cowper (1791), "gnarled," *Measure for Measure* and nineteenth century, "home-keeping," *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Miss Mitford (1826). He might have given a special paragraph to Scott, the great rescuer of Shakespearean English.

American pronunciation may be described, it appears, as American, Western, Eastern and Southern, and the variations are to be explained historically and ethnographically. Mr. George Moore objects to the use of "pensée" in English, and Mr. Fowler, feeling that "Apophthegms is dead and Aphorisms has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds," wishes to "hand in a nomination paper for 'Sentences' in opposition to the alien 'pensées' and the upstart 'laconics'." The sting in the tail of his letter will hardly pierce the impervious hides of those for whom it is meant. The evidence of the poets is unanimous for rhyming "clothes" with Shakespeare's "arose," with Herrick's "my Julia goes," and with the maid's "nose" assaulted by the blackbird. Hence the back-formation "old clo," a parallel to which is the Lake Country "scree," which, according to its Old Norse origin, must once have been "screeth."

The Psychology of Language is due to the collaboration of a professor of psychology and a professor of linguistics. It "applies the data of the biological sciences to the interpretation of language phenomena," and is to be followed by a volume on bi-linguistics. An adequate account of it could be written only by a reviewer versed in kindred studies. This reviewer must confess that his reaction to the book is that of Elvira's lover to Mr. Martin Tupper's elucidation of the cracker motto problem.

With Mr. McKnight's *Modern English in the Making* one finds oneself back on firmer ground. Of attractive histories of the English language there is no lack. The names of Bradley, Jespersen, Wyld and Pearsall Smith, all freely quoted here, naturally occur to one in this connection. Professor McKnight has conceived the idea of writing, on a larger scale than any of those mentioned, the history of Modern English. With the briefest prelude on Chaos and the Chaucerian age, he writes the life of the language from Caxton to Mr. Sinclair Lewis. The various influences which brought about the great transformations referred to above are clearly traced. The new humanism, which flooded the language with Latin and Greek neologisms, was held in check by the Puritan revolution:

From sins of excess in learning English was held through the need of a simple form of language to bring home to the plain Englishman the truths of the gospel,

i.e., Holofernes was neutralized by the compilers of the Authorized Version. The vital element in the Renaissance influence is likened by the author to the effects of sherris-sack as described by Falstaff, and the product of this influence is Shakespeare, whose contribution to our vocabulary and phraseology is, as already indicated, beyond all estimation. Mr. Gordon's tract appeared too late to be utilized in this section of the book. Particularly interesting is the discussion of the emendations by which Dryden and Davenant attempted to bring Shakespeare up to date and make him intelligible to the cultured Restoration public, e.g. "stept in" for "popt in" and "gentle maid" for "poor wench." Equally amusing are the corrections of Milton by Bentley, "whose unwearied pains made Horace dull and humbled Milton's strains." The eighteenth century saw the triumph of the grammarians and lexicographers, and one shudders to think what might have become of the poor language, if there had been no Romantic revival. As Mr. McKnight is Professor of English at Ohio, it is only natural that he should include a chapter on *The Beginnings of American English*. Noah Webster informed Basil Hall, in 1828, that there were "not more than fifty words in all which were used in America and not in England . . . all these apparent novelties are merely Old English words." This would hardly seem to apply to "bunkshooter," "honkytonk," "floozy," "cahoots," "mazuma," "slimpsy," and "sbyzch," explained, with others, in the introduction provided for the English edition of Carl Sandberg's *Collected Poems*. Some progress in a century!

It is true that English has lost the power of coining new words, and that, as Mrs. Virginia Woolf says, when we want to freshen our speech we borrow from America—"poppycock," "rambunctious," "flip-flop," "booster," "good mixer." I suppose we use most of them wrongly. Professor McKnight, like Mr. Mencken, drops a tear over the incomprehension of American slang by English authors who attempt to handle it. Another shock for educated Americans is the misuse of "who" for "whom" by Meredith, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Housman, Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith and others equally distinguished. In Boston it is said that even the owls say "to-whit, to-whom"!

Miss Masson's little book was first published in 1896, with a preface by her distinguished father. She is conservative: "The use of the subjunctive mood is dying out. This is to be regretted." The subjunctive has suffered a rather violent resurrection in America, and it is curious that Professor McKnight has nothing to say on the subject. Walter Page's letters reek with this obsolescent mood, and Mr. Sinclair Lewis, who might be supposed to have heard of the sequence of tenses, delights in such sentences as, "She insisted that he admire her hats, that he knock before coming into her room," etc. Miss Masson, on the whole, is linguistically a *laudatrix temporis acti*. She quotes the old-time lover's madrigal to a fair lady's ringlets, which pleases her better than "Some hair"!

This is not the place to review Mr. Smith's *Place-Names of the North Riding*, which maintains the high standard of this monumental series. The chief characteristics of the region are an almost complete absence of British names, a strong Anglian element due to the settlement of the invaders in the sixth century, an equally strong Old Norse element dating from the partial conquest effected by the Danes in the ninth century, and a new Scandinavian layer super-imposed by Norwegian intruders who had sojourned in Ireland long enough to adopt a number of Gaelic words and names. "The effects of the Scandinavian settlement of Yorkshire were manifold. The country was divided into Scandinavian 'ridings,' the ridings were divided into Scandinavian 'wapentakes,' and the Vikings set up meeting-places for their own 'things' on such sites as Thingwall." There are still some educated English people who are not subscribers to the Society. If these could be rounded up, we might look forward to two or three volumes a year and the completion of the great survey within the lifetime of the elderly.

Professor Jespersen puts the case for his new auxiliary language, Novial (= *nov*, i.e., new, International Auxiliary Language), with the cogency and moderation which distinguish all his writings. It is intended for the use of the literate, who are often unable to read articles or understand speeches in the less familiar European languages. Professor Jespersen apparently believes that all the literate know Latin. Perhaps in Denmark a book could not appear with the epigraph "alter tempores, alter mores," but it could and did in England in the spring of 1929. The Novial "Mey Deo helpa me, pensad li oldi ministro, apertant li okules largim, me ya pove vida nulum!" rather suggests the same kind of Latin.

ERNEST WEEKLEY

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

THE HOLY CITIES OF ARABIA. By Eldon Rutter, 2 vols. Putnam. 42s.

BUSH WHACKING AND OTHER TALES FROM MALAYA. By SIR HUGH CLIFFORD. Heinemann. 10s. 6d.

TWELVE DAYS. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST. Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.

JOHN CAMERON'S ODYSSEY. Transcribed by ANDREW FARRELL. Macmillan. 18s.

THE SOUTH POLAR TRAIL. By ERNEST M. JOYCE. Duckworth. 10s. 6d.

KIT CARSON. By STANLEY VESTAL. Hodder and Stoughton. 10s. 6d.

FROM LEIPZIG TO CABUL. By G. STRATIL-SAUER. Hutchinson. 18s.

THE BROADWAY TRAVELLERS : IBN BATUTA, edited by H. A. R. GIBB, 15s. ; HANS STADEN, edited by MALCOLM LETTS, 10s. 6d. ; THOMAS HERBERT, edited by Sir WILLIAM FOSTER, 15s. Routledge.

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE WAR : GALLIPOLI, 1915. By Brig-General ASPINALL OGLANDER. Heinemann, 15s. (Maps, 4s. 6d.)

THE time has come when it needs to be stated plainly that the literature of modern travel is marking time. It is doing it very prettily, no doubt, but it is doing no more. It does not really advance a step, or break new ground. Or if it does advance, it is in the fixed, familiar grooves. It is not even a bus, but a tram. It is standardised. There are the adventurous ladies who go to places where no white woman has ever set foot before—not an impossibly difficult undertaking, if you have the money—and there are those who go to well-known places, but try to say something about them that no one has ever said before—which is probably a good deal harder. The South Seas, of course, are always with us—the Americans see to that—and there are certain recognised fields of exploration, such as the archaeologists' happy hunting in Honduras, which are by no means being neglected. But we wait in vain for something of fresh and individual genius, either in the subject matter or the style. It is no defence of the travel-writers to say that the travellers also are marking time. The actual itinerary matters little. There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that any fool who travels widely can write a good book if he will only record what he sees. As a matter of fact, the one travel book of outstanding merit which has appeared since last September, deals with places no farther away from home than the Arabian peninsula—I refer, of course, to Mr. Rutter's *Holy Cities of Arabia*. Let us interrupt our complaints to pay a respectful if somewhat belated tribute to this remarkable work.

Mr. H. St. J. Philby, who knows what he is talking about, has described Mr. Rutter as "a new star in the Arabian firmament—Burckhardt, Burton, Snouck Hurgronje, Wavell : and now Rutter." This is high praise—rather too high, perhaps. I have not read Snouck Hurgronje, but to class Mr. Rutter with Burton, for instance, is rather cruelly (and unnecessarily) to dim his star. If Mr. Philby has a fault—and, of course, we are all immensely in his debt—it is that he is more interested in geography than in literature. A man who has altered so many maps may have some excuse for feeling like that. But simply as travel literature, Burton and Doughty (it s

odd that he doesn't mention Doughty) are obviously in a class apart. Mr. Rutter's great contribution to Arabian travel literature, as it seems to me, lies not so much in the wide range of his journeys, or the dangers he encountered, as in the fact that he gives us, for the first time, the point of view of the town-dweller in the Moslem Holy-land—the ordinary inhabitant of Mecca or Medina, who has been execrated as a common robber in every previous European work on the subject, and from the lips of every returning Moslem pilgrim, so that we have almost forgotten that he may, after all, have a case. Mr. Rutter's visit to Mecca took place in 1925, when already the city was writhing under the heel of the Wahabi conquerors—puritans to whom even the smoking of a cigarette seemed a mortal sin. The Meccans must be sighing now for the good old hugger-mugger days of King Hussein, and personally, I cannot help feeling sorry for them. Mr. Rutter went on his pilgrimage as a Moslem. He had a certain amount of trouble when it was discovered that he was a European, but he came out of it very well in the end, thanks to his tact and his instinctive sympathy with Oriental ways of thought. His style is admirable—clear, incisive, unaffected; with a suggestion of Doughty, no doubt, but that is inevitable and not necessarily objectionable. He has written the best book on Arabia of the last two years, and the best travel book of any kind for many months.

So much for Mr. Rutter. Turning now to the light-weights, Sir Hugh Clifford, with his delightful *Bush Whacking and Other Tales from Malaya*, easily takes first place. It seems unnecessary to describe such a book as this. The type is well-known, and is sufficiently indicated by the title. But the point to notice is that this is an almost perfect example of its kind—chatty, affable, descriptive—with a real gift for describing scenery—and all dished up under a thin disguise of fiction, which at first is a little irritating, but is easily forgiven when you notice how it helps the author along. Fiction is our chosen and natural form of self-expression nowadays. About a month ago, a perfectly genuine War diary was served up as fiction; and it was one of the most convincing, as well as one of the most readable War diaries I have read. The author, in his introduction, explained that every recorded incident had actually taken place, but that he preferred to make fiction of it, because he found that form suited him best. I wish a few more of our light-weight travel-writers would adopt the same plan. Then there is Miss V. Sackville-West, who has been visiting Persia again (this time the south-west) and shows once more her extraordinary power of expressing herself on paper, when she has anything to say. And there is *John Cameron's Odyssey*, which is very readable, but not nearly as good as that of Aloysius Horn. And there is Mr. E. M. Joyce, with a simple, unadorned record of how he laid food-depots for Shackleton in his expedition of 1914—an unromantic but terribly exacting duty in these affairs, of which the public does not hear enough. Mr. Vestal has written a lively biography of that great "Western Hero," Kit Carson, one of the founders of the "Woolly-west" tradition, who has hitherto been the sport of America's dullest biographers. And Mr. G. Stratil-Sauer, a young German scientist, tells us how he conceived the apparently idiotic idea of riding on a motor-cycle through Armenia and Persia to Afghanistan, of the appalling and deserved hardships he endured on the way, of his narrow escape from sudden death, and of his incarceration in an Afghan jail. This is the most exciting book of the lot, for it records one of the most remarkable adventures of recent years.

Before the nineteenth century, I do not suppose that it had ever occurred to any traveller that the reading public might be interested in his own personal "reactions," or that it was of any use describing visits to places already known. The object of a travel book in those days was just to tell us what the writer had seen. Hence the

closely-packed narrative—the meatiness—of the older records, which makes them such a refreshing change after a long and rather disappointing session with our modern impressionists. Here are the Broadway Travellers, for instance. I select three from among the latest additions to this great library (of which Sir E. Denison Ross and Miss Eileen Power, the editors, must be growing prouder every day) : Ibn Batuta, the Moslem traveller of the fourteenth century ; Hans Staden, the German, who was a prisoner among the American Indians a hundred years later ; and Thomas Herbert, the same who attended Charles I to the scaffold in Whitehall, but is here seen on a diplomatic mission to Persia in 1627. The greatest of these is Ibn Batuta. His lengthy narrative has been translated afresh from the Arabic by Mr. Gibb and cut down to manageable length. That sounds dangerous, but, as a matter of fact, you cannot spoil Ibn Batuta : his quaint, individual charm is indestructible. I agree with the editor that he probably never went to China, though he describes it in detail. He was a great traveller, a keen observer, and a writer of genius ; but he was also a bit of a liar. From the point of view of book construction Hans Staden beats him. There is less humour here and much less variety, but also less diffusion of effort. This is the record of one terrible adventure, and no more : of how a white prisoner was led about naked through the Indian villages, mocked and ill-treated, and at least a dozen times on the very point of being served up at table—and yet survived, and kept his health, and his nerves too, intact. A stout fellow—and, I think, an honest historian.

Lastly, the tragic adventure of Gallipoli, enacted, as the official historian remarks, “ upon the most historic of all stages for a noble feat of arms.” He adds very justly that “ it witnessed on the part of all the belligerents engaged—whether British, Australian, New Zealand, French or Turk—a heroism and self-sacrifice that reached the topmost pinnacle of human endeavour.” General Aspinall-Oglander tells once again the moving story of the landings, the heroism, the bitter failure ; and he leaves the invaders, after the battle of Krithia, settling down reluctantly to the siege of what had now become a fortress. The ruins of Troy were almost in sight across the water. Alas, we had no Ulysses ! The Gallipoli campaign, no doubt because of its dramatic appeal, has been fortunate in its historians. It is not only that it has provoked so much controversy. Quite apart from controversial writings, the Australian official history was written (by Mr. C. E. W. Bean) with extraordinary zest and has left an unforgettable impression of Anzac upon the minds of all who read it. General Aspinall-Oglander too, with his wider canvas, yet succeeds in avoiding entirely that detached inhuman manner which we dread in such books. He writes quietly, but well. He is not afraid of colour. He distributes blame freely and frankly—and goodness knows there is plenty of that to be done ! Wrongly conceived, begun too late, and then muddled in almost every particular, there have been few campaigns in our history that have reflected less credit on British statesmanship or generalship.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

NAUTICAL LITERATURE

IN THE WAKE OF THE WIND SHIPS. By F. W. WALLACE. Hodder & Stoughton. 21s.

IN THE DAYS OF THE TALL SHIPS. By R. A. FLETCHER. Brentano's. 15s.

FAMOUS YACHTS. By J. S. HUGHES. Methuen. 15s.

OLD SEA PAINTINGS. By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON. The Bodley Head. £2 2s. and £5 5s.

MAIL AND PASSENGER STEAMSHIPS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By CAPT. H. PARKER and F. C. BOWEN. Sampson Low. £3 3s.

THE SHIP UNDER STEAM. By G. GIBBARD JACKSON. Fisher Unwin. 10s.

SEAWAYS AND SEA TRADE. By A. C. HARDY. Routledge. 15s.

THE age of sail is passing, has almost passed ; and the men who have served in sailing ships grow fewer year by year. It is, therefore, well that accounts of their achievements and descriptions of the ships which they handled should be put on permanent record before it is too late. The story of our own sailing ships has been told in many books, but it has been left to Mr. F. W. Wallace to gather together the history of the ships of another maritime part of the Empire. Canada, to most of us, is associated with wheat and fruit, tinned salmon and rare furs, rather than with shipbuilding. But at one time, in the days before wood had given place to iron and steel, the Eastern Provinces of Canada were famous the world over for their staunch ships and the men who sailed them. Some of these wooden ships, of great tonnage for their times, were built by local workmen in little rural hamlets far removed from great cities ; in fact, Quebec and St. John were the only cities in Canada where shipbuilding flourished. Quebec was not an ideal spot for this trade, the climate was against it, but altogether more than 2,500 craft were launched from its yards :

And as most of these craft were built during the long months of winter ; when deep snows cloaked the ground ; when the frost at times was so intense that a steel wedge could not be driven into a hardwood timber and the bare hand would stick to metal, the men who laboured in the open air at the building of a ship must needs be iron men.

Quebeckers built ships, but few ever went to sea in them : and as they had to be manned—they were mostly taken to Liverpool for sale—the sailors were cajoled or kidnapped from the timber fleets by crimps. There was, apparently, open warfare between the visiting shipmasters and the crimps, and, as many of the most notorious of these were prominent citizens, their misdeeds were winked at, and official Quebec noticed neither the illegal doings of the sailor snatchers nor the retaliatory acts of the masters and mates. And so the game went on for over fifty years.

But if Canada specialised in wooden ships she also turned out iron men to command them, and of these Mr. Wallace tells us much. One of them, Captain Bernier, who at 74 years of age was still in harness in 1926, was master at 17 and has commanded no fewer than 107 ships, being noted for his fast passages across the Atlantic and his skill in selling his ships when he reached Liverpool. He was also a shipwright of no mean ability, and on one occasion when his ship had sprung a serious leak he improvised a pair of paddle wheels which revolved with the ship's passage through the water

and worked the pumps. A considerable portion of *In the Wake of the Wind Ships* is taken up with somewhat catalogue-like lists of ships and passages ; but, on the other hand, it is enlivened with sufficient stories of fires and mutinies, and of the doings of "Bluenose" skippers, to prevent it from being dull reading.

There is only one sailing ship left on the British registry, and there are precious few belonging to other nations. Two of these are now engaged in a friendly race back from Australia, but sixty years ago the race from China with the new season's tea was an annual event. It was, moreover, an event of considerable commercial importance, for not only was a heavy premium paid to the first ship to dock in London each season, but, while the ordinary freight rate was some £3 per ton, the fastest vessels would earn up to £8 per ton. Hence the owners naturally encouraged a keen rivalry between the skippers engaged in the trade and built vessels—the famous tea clippers—especially for racing back from China. At first the Americans had things all their own way. The British builders were a conservative body and followed the traditional lines of steadiness and reliability, while their trans-Atlantic rivals went all out for speed. But when once our builders began to realise that speed and reliability could go together most of the race winners were British built. And what races they were! In 1866, for instance, five ships finished loading at Foochow almost together, and 99 days later three of them docked in London within an hour and a half while the other two were less than two days behind!

The story of these races is well told by Mr. R. A. Fletcher in *In the Days of the Tall Ships*, as is that of the East Indiamen of an earlier generation. These were operated quite differently from the clippers. Speed was not wanted, and they were "snugged down" every night; they were not built for driving but for slow and stately progress, and were armed sufficiently heavily to enable them to beat off attacks by privateers and even French frigates on occasion; naval discipline was the rule on board. The captains received little in the way of salary, but their perquisites were so valuable that they usually made some £6,000 a year and in some cases up to £10,000. At one time they were allowed to buy and sell their commands, and sums of from £2,000 to £10,000 passed for these posts. But the East Indiamen belonged to a company with a monopoly, and paid well enough until this monopoly was taken away.

If the commercial sailing ship is nearly a thing of the past, the yacht is as popular as ever it was. In fact, the number of yachting enthusiasts is growing steadily. Pepys could not understand how anyone could like sailing for pleasure and described Colonel Wyndham as "the only gentleman of State ever known to addict himself to the sea for pleasure and from his own natural addiction." But seventy years later Fielding deplored the "want of taste in our enjoyments which we show by almost totally neglecting the pursuit of what seems to me the highest degree of amusement. This is sailing ourselves in little vessels of our own." And he hit the nail on the head when he added "the truth, I believe, is that sailing . . . is a pleasure unknown or unthought of rather than rejected by those who have experienced it." Yachting, in the popular mind, is associated with wealth; but in these days of dinghy races and sailing clubs at every little port it can almost be regarded as a poor man's sport—and there is as much enjoyment to be got out of a small boat as out of the finest racing yacht afloat. Mr. J. S. Hughes gives us an account of many of the best known yachts both past and present, and deals with all types from single-handers to full-rigged ships carrying a hundred hands. *Famous Yachts* is well produced and beautifully illustrated, but there are one or two small mistakes. The Ocean Race of 1905, for instance, was from Sandy Hook to the Lizard, and not to the Needles as stated; and the captions of the two prints of the *Falcon* have been transposed.

Lovers of ships and the sea owe much to Mr. Keble Chatterton, who has followed up his *Old Ship Prints* with another delightful volume on *Old Sea Paintings*, the illustrations in which are again taken mainly from the famous Macpherson collection which has recently been acquired for the nation. In the early days of marine painting both the ships and the sea were depicted in a conventional rather than an accurate manner ; and for several centuries ships were introduced into pictures because they were necessary for the subject rather than for their own sakes. Artists were apt to copy stereotyped designs somewhat slavishly, and we cannot rely on their pictures for details of the ships of their times. In fact, it was not until the seventeenth century that painters began to show ships as they really were ; and even then the student of the evolution of ships and rigging is up against another snag in his search for the truth, for artists were apt to introduce ships of their own times into pictures representing earlier episodes of nautical history. The Dutch school of marine painting flourished and declined at the same time as the Dutch navy and mercantile marine. Then followed some mediocre English artists whose pictures are records rather than anything else, and finally we come to painters who were able to portray ships as they actually existed and who could also interpret the sea in all its moods.

Mail and Passenger Steamships of the Nineteenth Century is little more than a beautifully got up and illustrated catalogue of that portion of the Macpherson collection. The ships are chronicled alphabetically, and a brief history of each is followed by details of the known prints and pictures of her, while the 170 black and white illustrations are put together at the end of the book. There are also sixteen finely reproduced illustrations in colour.

In *The Ship under Steam* Mr. G. G. Jackson traces the growth of the steamship from its beginning—the first patent for a steamboat was taken out in 1736—to the modern liner. Few of us realise that a steamboat was actually running, on the Saône near Lyons, in 1783 ; but the inventors of these early boats received little encouragement, and it was not till twenty or thirty years later that steam was taken seriously. Even then the pioneers had to put up with much opposition from vested interests and the steamer did not come into its own for another half-century. But when it did it killed its sailing ship rival with utter ruthlessness.

The last book on the list is of a totally different character, and is well described in its sub-title as “ a maritime geography of routes, ports, rivers, canals and cargoes.” As such it is intensely interesting, for Mr. Hardy has a happy knack of turning what might well be considered a dull subject into a most fascinating study.

G. B. HONY